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George Crabbe

to

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

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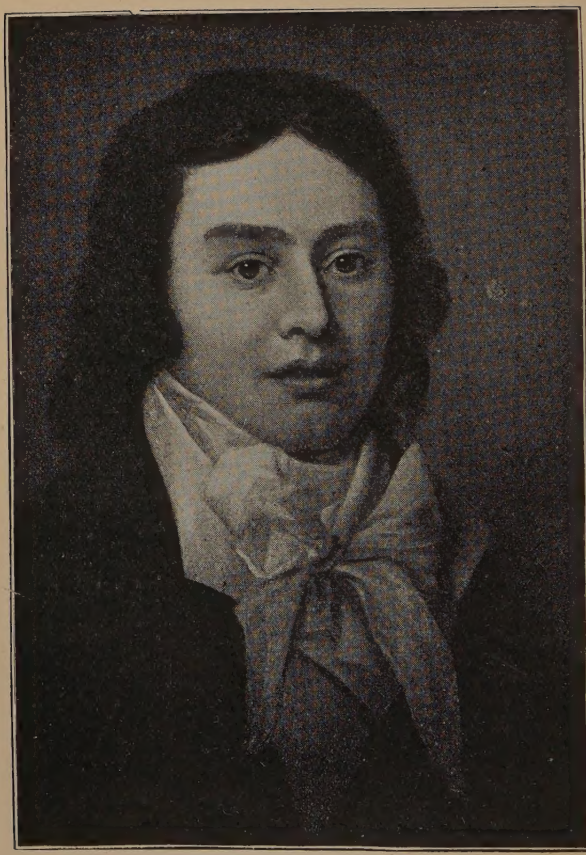

S. T. Coleridge

The Poets and the Poetry of the Nineteenth Century

George Crabbe
to
Samuel Taylor Coleridge

Edited by
ALFRED H. MILES

LONDON
GEORGE ROUTLEDGE & SONS, LTD.
NEW YORK: E. P. DUTTON & CO.
1905

In the prefatory note of the first edition of this work (1891) the Editor invited criticism with a view to the improvement of future editions. Several critics responded to this appeal, and their valuable suggestions have been considered in preparing this re-issue. In some cases the text has been revised and the selection varied; in others, additions have been made to complete the representation. The biographical and bibliographical matter has been brought up to date.—A. H. M.

PREFATORY.

THIS work aims to be an Encyclopædia of Modern Poetry, covering the area of Greater Britain and the limits of the Nineteenth Century. Its plan is to represent each poet in the variety of his work, giving such biographical data and such criticism as may serve to illustrate it.

The poets of the century are taken to be, not only those who may be gazetted, ultimately, as poets of all time, but also those who, during a remarkable period of energy and development, have represented in poetic form the faiths and doubts, the hopes and fears, of the great heart of humanity which has throbbed through the generations, the time beat of the song of liberty and the march of progress.

That there have been poets who have never written verse, will be scarcely questioned; since from Aristotle's day to our own it has been admitted that poetry may be produced by writers who do not write in metrical form. Be this as it may, the prose poets, like the "*tone poets*," are beyond the scope of this work; but for the rest, it has been held that the occasional verse of successful prose writers has, when of sufficient excellence, a title to a place within its pages.

The poets selected on these lines have been subjected to a very simple classification. Beginning with

George Crabbe, who may be said to unite the characteristics of two centuries, inspiring the form of the old with the spirit of the new, the main body of the work is devoted to the major poets and those of the minor poets who, addressing themselves to the serious business of life, have endeavoured to represent its varied phases and sought to solve its many problems. With these are included the dramatic poets, as well as those who, having no distinctive message for mankind, still rank as independent poets, and cannot be included under any other classification. Separate volumes are devoted to the work of the women poets of the century,—this being a development of the period, and one of the happiest and most characteristic features of its literature;—also to the Sacred poets, and to the poets of Society and Humour. The arrangement throughout is chronological; the poets taking their places in order of birth, and, as far as possible and convenient, their poems in order of composition. The earliest date is given in each case where dates are known, and their publication desirable. In a few cases it has been found necessary to divide the representation and to include the poet in more than one section. The Editor's treatment of Hood may be cited as an example; Hood's serious poems having a place in the main body of the work, and his lighter verse in the volume devoted to Society and Humour.

In making the selections, the Editor has been animated by a desire to do complete justice to the poets concerned. He has therefore aimed at *full* representation. To under-estimate is an act of injustice, to over-represent is but an error of

discrimination. In the case of writers who have passed away, he has endeavoured to realise what would be their own selection, if, in view of the altered conditions of society, and with a knowledge of modern criticism, they could themselves determine the issue. Living writers have in all cases been consulted, and the selection of their poetry is the result of conference between Poet, Editor, and Critic.

In determining the space to be allotted to each poet, the Editor has discarded the use of the foot rule. The plan which allows twelve inches to Homer, eleven to Virgil, ten to Dante, and so on, according to individual judgment as to the relative merits of each, is largely mechanical, and, in the opinion of the Editor, ought never to be applied to poetry. Generally speaking, the greater the poet, the less the space he will require to demonstrate his superiority; though of course the mere variety of his poetic energy commands a larger space than that which is devoted to a lesser poet. Other considerations also tend to modify any attempt to allot the pages upon a mechanical basis. There have been poets who have sung sweetly and who deserve remembrance, but whose voices, drowned by the chorus of stronger singers of their own and subsequent times, have failed to charm the public ear, and are listened to only by the few. In such cases fulness is perhaps the only reparation that can be made for tardiness of recognition. There are others who have published volumes which have passed out of print, volumes which contain poetry worthy of perpetuation, poetry which may find proper asylum in a work like this. This applies to the minor poets

throughout the work. If some of these are represented at greater length than would seem due, it is on the ground of their inaccessibility elsewhere. A further modification has been necessary in some cases to meet the views of poets or publishers or both. Some allowance must be made, too, for differences of literary style in the articles introducing the selections; and again the measure and quality of the incident in the lives which they record must in some appreciable degree govern the length of the notice. Macaulay and Carlyle could hardly have been expected to take precisely the same space even in saying precisely the same thing; and the short life of Byron was much more full of incidents which must be reckoned in estimating him, than was the long life of Wordsworth.

No pains have been spared to render the text absolutely accurate. Many editions have been compared and the variations noted. Some of these are trifling and unimportant, and probably owe their existence more to the printer than the poet. Most poets, however, have shown some disposition to conciliate criticism, and many, in deference to the judgment of others, have subjected their work to revision, a practice not always attended with success. For the purposes of this work the last editions issued under the supervision of the poets themselves have as a rule been accepted as the standard, but these have been compared with earlier editions, and where, as in the case of Wordsworth, earlier renderings are sometimes selected, the final version of the poet is always given in a note.

The critical and biographical notices in most

cases bear the names of the writers responsible for them. It has been the Editor's desire that these should be written sympathetically, as he believes that a sympathetic spirit is necessary to an accurate insight, and that the whole truth is rarely spoken except by those who speak the truth in love. In the Editor's judgment every man has a right that the best shall be said of him that can be said, and he has a right that the best shall be said, if not first in point of order, certainly in the best place and in the best way. It is not yet possible to appraise accurately the poetic work of the century; distance is necessary to a comprehensive view, and the ultimate verdict after all is not with the critics, but with mankind. Lord Houghton, in his introduction to the poems of David Gray, says, "There is in truth no critic of poetry but the man who enjoys it, and the amount of gratification felt is the only just measure of criticism." To help to the enjoyment of contemporary poetry is the object of the criticism in this work, and in no sense is it an attempt to anticipate the final judgment which can only be pronounced when Time, the Editor of editors, shall select for the last anthology the swan-songs of the world.

The Editor's indebtedness to critics, poets, and publishers is too great for due acknowledgment here. He would, however, be wanting in the simplest gratitude were he to miss the earliest opportunity of recording his high sense of the generous help accorded him by Dr. Garnett, Mr. Buxton Forman, and many of our most eminent contemporary critics, whose disinterested sympathy and invaluable advice have placed him under permanent obligation. To these gentlemen, with the numerous poets, critics,

and publishers represented in this work, and without whose co-operation its issue would have been impossible, the Editor tenders his sincere thanks, recognising in their generous treatment a poetry of action which is alike above expression, criticism, and publication. Further, the Editor begs to say that he will be grateful to poets and critics alike who, with these volumes before them, will point out anything which may tend to make future editions more useful and complete.

It is the Editor's hope, that beyond the pleasure, it may yield to the general reader, this work may encourage a more serious study of poetic literature and prove a valuable help to those who lack the means of access to the works of the poets in their complete form. It has grown out of his own searchings after truth and beauty in the fields of literature, and is issued in the hope that it may facilitate the search of others, and by saving them some toil upon the hill of Difficulty, leave them the larger leisure for the feast in the Palace Beautiful and the view of the Promised Land.

A. H. M.

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George Crabbe.

1754—1832.

GEORGE CRABBE (whose work forms a connecting link between the poetry of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries), was born at Aldeburgh, a seaport town in Suffolk, on Christmas Eve, 1754.

The poet's grandfather was a burgess of Aldeburgh, and his father a schoolmaster sometime at Orford in Suffolk, and later at Norton near Loddon, Norfolk, where he also filled the office of parish clerk. Returning to Aldeburgh about 1750 he became a warehouse-keeper and part owner of a fishing-boat, succeeding later to the appointment of collector of the salt dues. He married Mrs. Loddock, a widow of Aldeburgh, a devout and amiable woman, who became the mother of the poet. He was a man of vigorous habits, and possessed of mental powers above the average of his fellows; he had a taste for literature, and a fondness for mathematics, both of which descended to his son. The young poet also inherited strength of character from his father; while his mother gave him a humane and loving disposition.

Crabbe's first attempts at versification were imitations of the effusions that appeared in the poets' corner of *Martin's Philosophical Magazine*, then taken in by his father. These developed in him a taste for poetry and reading, and he became "a snapper-up of unconsidered trifles," in the shape of

books and ballads, in the cottages of the fisherfolk of Aldeburgh, and, later, a welcome guest and an appreciated reader at their firesides. The following lines, written nearly fifty years after, and put into the mouth of one of the brothers in the "Tales of the Hall," confessedly express some of the poet's recollections of his boyhood:—

(From Book IV.)

"I sought the town, and to the ocean gave
My mind and thoughts, as restless as the wave:
Where crowds assembled, I was sure to run,
Heard what was said, and mused on what was done;
Attentive listening in the moving scene,
And often wondering what the men could mean.

When ships at sea made signals of their need,
I watch'd on shore the sailors, and their speed:
Mix'd in their act, nor rested till I knew
Why they were call'd, and what they were to do.

Whatever business in the port was done,
I, without call, was with the busy one;
Not daring question, but with open ear
And greedy spirit, ever bent to hear.

To me the wives of seamen loved to tell
What storms endanger'd men esteem'd so well;
What wond'rous things in foreign parts they saw,
Lands without bounds, and people without law.

No ships were wreck'd upon that fatal beach,
But I could give the luckless tale of each;
Eager I look'd, till I beheld a face
Of one disposed to paint their dismal case;
Who gave the sad survivors' doleful tale,
From the first brushing of the mighty gale
Until they struck; and, suffering in their fate,
I long'd the more they should its horrors state;
While some, the fond of pity, would enjoy
The earnest sorrows of the feeling boy.
I sought the men return'd from regions cold,
The frozen straits, where icy mountains roll'd;

Some I could win to tell me serious tales
Of boats uplifted by enormous whales." . . .

"They told of days, where many goes to one—
Such days as ours; and how a larger sun,
Red, but not flaming, roll'd, with motion slow,
On the world's edge, and never dropt below.

There were fond girls, who took me to their side
To tell the story how their lovers died;
They praised my tender heart, and bade me prove
Both kind and constant when I came to love."

* * * * * *

"I loved to walk where none had walk'd before,
About the rocks that ran along the shore;
Or far beyond the sight of men to stray,
And take my pleasure when I lost my way;
For then 'twas mine to trace the hilly heath,
And all the mossy moor that lies beneath:
Here had I favourite stations, where I stood
And heard the murmurs of the ocean-flood,
With not a sound beside, except when flew
Aloft the lapwing, or the gray curlew,
Who with wild notes my fancied power defied,
And mock'd the dreams of solitary pride.

I loved to stop at every creek and bay
Made by the river in its winding way,
And call to memory—not by marks they bear,
But by the thoughts that were created there.

Pleasant it was to view the sea-gulls strive
Against the storm, or in the ocean dive,
With eager scream, or when they dropping gave
Their closing wings to sail upon the wave:
Then as the winds and waters raged around,
And breaking billows mix'd their deafening sound;
They on the rolling deep securely hung,
And calmly rode the restless waves among.
Nor pleased it less around me to behold,
Far up the beach, the yeasty sea-foam roll'd;
Or from the shore upborne, to see on high,
Its frothy flakes in wild confusion fly:
While the salt spray that clashing billows form,
Gave to the taste a feeling of the storm.

Thus, with my favourite views, for many an hour
Have I indulged the dreams of princely power;
When the mind, wearied by excursions bold,
The fancy jaded, and the bosom cold,
Or when those wants, that will on kings intrude,
Or evening-fears, broke in on solitude;
When I no more my fancy could employ,
I left in haste what I could not enjoy,
And was my gentle mother's welcome boy."

John Henry Newman, in his "Office and Work of Universities," says of the passage from which these lines are taken, "it is one of the most touching in our language;" and goes on to add—"I read it on its first publication, above thirty years ago, with extreme delight, and have never lost my love for it; and on looking it up lately, found I was even more touched by it than heretofore. A work which can please in youth and age seems to fulfil (in logical language) the accidental definition of a classic."

Unfitted by nature for the rough occupations of Aldeburgh, Crabbe was sent to school, and at the age of fourteen his father apprenticed him to a surgeon. In 1772 the young poet gained a prize offered by the Editor of the *Ladies' Magazine* for a poem on "Hope;" encouraged by which he produced a large quantity of verse, culminating in his poem "Inebriety," published at Ipswich in 1774-5. In 1775 Crabbe's apprenticeship expired, and for a time he endured the drudgery of the quay and the warehouse. After a brief visit to London in search of surgical knowledge, and several unsuccessful attempts to pursue the profession of a surgeon in his native town, he again left Aldeburgh for London, in April, 1780, with but a scanty wardrobe, a case of surgical instruments, a few manuscripts, and

some three pounds in money. In "The Village," published in 1783, the poet gives a vigorous description of the condition of men and things at Aldeburgh, at the time he left it, recording his own feelings on the occasion. The following lines are quoted from the first edition :—

" Where are the swains, who, daily labour done,
With rural games play'd down the setting sun;
Who struck with matchless force the bounding ball,
Or made the pond'rous quoit obliquely fall;
While some huge Ajax, terrible and strong,
Engag'd some artful stripling of the throng,
And foil'd beneath the young Ulysses fell;
When peals of praise the merry mischief tell?
Where now are these? Beneath yon cliff they stand,
To show the freighted pinnace where to land;
To load the ready steed with guilty haste,
To fly in terror o'er the pathless waste,
Or when detected, in their straggling course,
To foil their foes by cunning or by force;
Or yielding part (when equal knaves contest),
To gain a lawless passport for the rest.

Here, wand'ring long amid these frowning fields,
I sought the simple life that Nature yields;
Rapine and Wrong and Fear usurp'd her place,
And a bold, artful, surly, savage race;

* * * * * *

As on their neighbouring beach yon swallows stand,
And wait for favouring winds to leave the land;
While still for flight the ready wing is spread:
So waited I the favouring hour, and fled;
Fled from these shores where guilt and famine reign,
And cry'd, Ah! hapless they who still remain;
Who still remain to hear the ocean roar,
Whose greedy waves devour the lessening shore;
Till some fierce tide, with more imperious sway,
Sweeps the low hut and all it holds away;"

Crabbe's first London publication, "The Candidate," a poetical epistle addressed "To the Authors of the *Monthly Review*," brought him little fame and no money; the critics treated it coldly, and the publisher failed. His next idea—a prose work entitled "A Plan for the Examination of our Moral and Religious Opinions"—was never published, and the poet's position became very precarious, as the following extract from his diary will show:—

"It's the vilest thing in the world to have but one coat. My only one has happened with a mischance, and how to manage it is some difficulty. A confounded stove's modish ornament caught its elbow, and rent it half away. Pinioned to the side it came home, and I ran deploring to my loft. In the dilemma, it occurred to me to turn tailor myself; but how to get materials to work with puzzled me. At last I went running down in a hurry, with three or four sheets of paper in my hand, and begged for a needle, etc., to sew them together. This finished my job, and, but that it is somewhat thicker, the elbow is a good one yet."

Crabbe applied to Lord North, Lord Thurlow, and Lord Shelburne, without success; and at last, threatened with the debtor's prison, in sheer desperation, wrote the now celebrated letter to Edmund Burke, enclosing with it the manuscripts of "The Library," and "The Village." Crabbe's letter to Burke was the turning point in his career. The statesman read the manuscripts, invited the poet to call upon him, and pleased with his manner, offered him a home in his own house, an offer which the all but homeless poet gladly accepted. Burke introduced Crabbe to Dodsley, the publisher, and, it is

thought, took upon himself the risk of publishing "The Library," which appeared in 1781.

"The Library" was a complete success, bringing the poet under the notice of Dr. Johnson, Joshua Reynolds, Fox, and other notable men of the time. It consists of a description of literature in its various departments, and contains the following oft-quoted lines descriptive of the poet's regrets at the loss of youthful illusions:—

"But lost, for ever lost, to me these joys,
Which Reason scatters, and which Time destroys;
Too dearly bought, maturer Judgment calls
My busied mind from tales and madrigals;
My doughty Giants all are slain or fled,
And all my Knights, blue, green, and yellow, dead;
No more the midnight Fairy tribe I view,
All in the merry moonshine tippling dew;
E'en the last lingering fiction of the brain,
The church-yard Ghost, is now at rest again;
And all these wayward wanderings of my youth
Fly Reason's power, and shun the light of Truth."

Lord Thurlow, who had taken no notice of Crabbe's appeal before, now invited him to breakfast, and presented him with £100, promising him more substantial help later on.

The poet now determined to enter the Church, was ordained deacon December 21st, 1781, and priest in August 1782, when he was also licensed as curate to Mr. Bennett, the Rector of Aldeburgh. After a brief stay in his native town, Crabbe received, through the influence of Burke, the appointment of Chaplain to the Duke of Rutland, and, in November 1782, took up his residence at Belvoir Castle. In the May of 1783, the poet published "The Village;" after submitting it to the judgment of Dr. Johnson,

who made a number of suggestions which were carried out, and who pronounced it to be "original, vigorous, and elegant."

"The Village" was a thorough success, and, though eclipsed by other works which followed from the same pen, is most important in estimating the part the poet played in the poetic reformation of his time. Crabbe was the first to give the lie to the false ideals of rustic happiness and virtue that pervaded the poetry of his predecessors; the first with iconoclastic hand to destroy the images of rural felicity and peace which had for so long deluded the ignorant and mocked the poor; the first with earnest purpose to sound the note which has since become the keynote of the poetry of the nineteenth century, and which has found expression in the perfected cadence of a later singer: "'Tis first the true and then the beautiful, not first the beautiful and then the true." The poet's purpose is admirably set forth in the following lines quoted from the first edition:—

"Fled are those times, if e'er such times were seen,
When rustic poets prais'd their native green;
No shepherds now in smooth alternate verse,
Their country's beauty or their nymphs' rehearse
Yet still for these we frame the tender strain,
Still in our lays fond Corydons complain,
And shepherds' boys their amorous pains reveal,
The only pains, alas! they never feel.

On Mincio's banks, in Cæsar's bounteous reign,
If Tityrus found the golden age again,
Must sleepy bards the flattering dream prolong,
Mechanic echo's of the Mantuan song?
From truth and nature shall we widely stray,
Where Virgil, not where fancy leads the way?"

* * * * * * *

"No, cast by Fortune on a frowning coast,
Which can no groves nor happy vallies boast;
Where other cares than those the Muse relates,
And other shepherds dwell with other mates;
By such examples taught, I paint the cot,
As truth will paint it, and as bards will not:"

Of the part Johnson played as critic to the MS. of "The Village," Boswell gives some account in his life of the stern old moralist; he says:—"Soon after this time I had an opportunity of seeing, by means of one of his friends, a proof that his talents, as well as his obliging service to authors, were ready as ever. He had revised 'The Village,' an admirable poem, by the Reverend Mr. Crabbe. Its sentiments as to the false notions of rustic happiness and rustic virtue, were quite congenial with his own; and he had taken the trouble not only to suggest slight corrections and variations, but to furnish some lines, when he thought he could give the writer's meaning better than in the words of the manuscript. I shall give an instance, marking the original by Roman, and Johnson's substitution in Italic characters:—

"'In fairer scenes, where peaceful pleasures spring,
Tityrus, the pride of Mantuan swains, might sing;
But charmed by him, or smitten with his views,
Shall modern poets court the Mantuan muse?
From Truth and Nature shall we widely stray,
Where Fancy leads, or Virgil led the way?'"

"'*On Mincio's banks, in Cæsar's bounteous reign,*
If Tityrus found the Golden Age again,
Must sleepy bards the flattering dream prolong,
Mechanic echoes of the Mantuan song?
From Truth and Nature shall we widely stray,
Where Virgil, not where Fancy, leads the way?'"

"Here," says Boswell, "we find Johnson's poetical and critical powers undiminished. I must, however,

observe that the aid he gave to this poem, as to 'The Traveller,' and 'Deserted Village' of Goldsmith, were so small as by no means to impair the distinguishing merit of the author."

How far Johnson's alterations were improvements may perhaps be open to discussion, for doubtless many will prefer Crabbe's simple lines, mean though they sometimes are, to the sonorous phrases which the critic substituted for them. In the last lines of the foregoing quotation given by Boswell, the poet's meaning seems to be clearer than that of the critic. It is due to Johnson to add that he disclaimed superiority for his alterations, and made them purely by way of suggestion.

Crabbe's position as a poet was now secured. "The Village" became popular, and the literary world recognised the advent of a new power. Lord Thurlow presented the poet with the two small livings of Frome St. Quintin, and Evershot in Dorsetshire; and Dr. Moore, the Archbishop of Canterbury, conferred upon him an honorary degree to enable him to accept them. As these appointments did not involve residence, Crabbe continued for a time to live at Belvoir Castle. In the December of this year (1783), after an engagement which had lasted for eleven years the poet married Miss Elmy, the "Mira" of his verse, at Beccles. A year or so later he accepted the curacy of Stathern, about four miles from Belvoir. Here he remained some four years, the happiest years of his life, during which time he produced "The Newspaper" (1785), a clever satire upon newspapers of a certain class.

The next twenty-two years were occupied with parochial and domestic duties. Lord Thurlow ap-

pointed him to the livings of Muston in Leicestershire, and West Arlington in Lincolnshire, and in 1789 he removed to Muston. This period, though barren of literary results, was not so in effort. Crabbe wrote much, but acting upon the advice of friends, committed to the flames an essay on Botany, three novels, and a volume of tales in verse.

The poet's next work was "The Parish Register," which he submitted to Fox, who made a number of criticisms and suggestions which Crabbe carefully observed. In the autumn of 1807 the "Parish Register" was published, and with it, besides some reprints, three new poems, "The Birth of Flattery," "Sir Eustace Gray," and "The Hall of Justice." The work was received with warm expressions of approval from both the public and the press; and the *Edinburgh Review*, which had come into existence since the publication of his other poems, spoke so highly of it that the whole of the first edition was sold out within two days of the appearance of the *Review*. "The Parish Register" is an advance upon "The Village," in its human interest, its delineations of character, and its depth of feeling. "The Hall of Justice," and "Sir Eustace Gray," are among the finest productions of Crabbe's genius.

Towards the end of 1809, Crabbe visited Aldeburgh, where he finished "The Borough," a poem in twenty-four letters, which was published by Hatchard in 1810. This work in its turn was pronounced to be superior to its predecessors, as the "Tales in Verse," published two years later, were declared to be superior to it. "The Borough" certainly contains some of the poet's most powerful writing, and is probably, all round, his best work.

The "Tales in Verse," published in August 1812, are twenty-one in number, and show the descriptive power of "The Village" and "The Parish Register," and the mastery in the delineation of character and the analysis of motive of "The Borough" in a wider sphere of action.

In the autumn of 1813 the poet became a widower. and was laid aside by a severe illness. On his recovery, the Duke of Rutland, the son of his former patron, presented him with the living of Trowbridge in Wiltshire, where he was inducted June 14th, 1814. Here he saw Samuel Rogers, whom he afterwards visited at St. James' Place, where he met the group of wits and poets who may be said to have succeeded the splendid company he had mingled with thirty years before. Johnson, Burke, and Sir Joshua Reynolds had all passed away; and Crabbe, who spent the earlier days in their society, now joined "the feast of reason and the flow of soul" with Rogers, Campbell, Byron, Moore, Scott, and Canning, himself the solitary connecting link between the old time and the new.

In the full tide of his popularity Crabbe published his "Tales of the Hall," June 1819. This work, like its predecessors, was a great and immediate success. Mr. Murray paid the poet no less a sum than £3,000 for "The Tales" and the remaining copyright of his other works; and Crabbe was so delighted with his success that he insisted on carrying the bills, with which he had been paid, down to Trowbridge to show his son. At the invitation of Scott, Crabbe visited Edinburgh, where he met Professor Wilson, James Hogg, Jeffrey, and others; after which he paid annual visits to

London, renewing old friendships and forming new, among which those of Wordsworth, Joanna Baillie, Wilberforce, and Southey, may be named.

At the end of 1831, while on a visit to his son at Pucklechurch, Crabbe preached twice on one Sunday with so much vigour that his son told him that he had another ten years before him, to which he gave the significant reply, "Ten weeks." The poet was, in this instance, a true prophet, for two months after his return to Trowbridge, he caught a cold from which he never recovered. Crabbe died on the 3rd of February, 1832, at about seven o'clock in the morning, in the seventy-eighth year of his age. Crabbe's posthumous "Tales" were published with his life by his son in 1834, and a volume of posthumous sermons followed in 1850.

Crabbe was fortunate enough to gain the approval of both schools of contemporary criticism. His adoption of the old forms gained for him the friendship of the one, and his infusion of the new spirit excited for him the sympathy of the other. Wordsworth said of Crabbe's poems, "They will last, from their combined merits as truth and poetry, fully as long as anything that has been expressed in verse since they first made their appearance;" and Byron, who began, in 1809, by describing him in his "English Bards and Scotch Reviewers" as "Nature's sternest painter yet her best," said in 1816 that he thought "Crabbe and Coleridge the first of these times in point of power and genius," and in 1820 declared him to be the "first of living poets." While contemporary "English bards" thus paid tribute to his genius, the "Scotch Reviewers" were equally warm in their appreciation; Jeffrey declaring that Crabbe

was the author of "some of the most original and powerful poetry which the world had ever seen;" and Professor Wilson describing him as "confessedly the most original and vivid painter of the vast varieties of common life, that England had ever produced."

Doubtless Crabbe has suffered more from the admiration of his friends than from the attacks of his enemies. Byron's laudation of him as the saviour of the school of Pope was ill-judged and premature. He adopted Pope's form, and in some measure his style, because it was the one most familiar to him, and because he found facility in its use, but he was not of Pope's school nor did he save it. The wit who called Crabbe "Pope in worsted stockings" was judging by manner rather than matter, and was just as wrong as he would have been had he called Pope, "Crabbe in silk tights." The point of difference was in the men, the point of similitude, in so far as it exists, is in the garments, though there is a difference in the texture of these. As a versifier Pope was greatly his superior, but Crabbe was a better man; and in place of brilliant diction and polished periods gave deep feeling and high moral purpose. Crabbe's faults were the result of uncultured taste (in which he is a contrast to Pope), and a want of care in composition, of which Pope was never guilty. Crabbe's work abounds in "tricky terms, awkward conceits, and illegal constraints of language," and he not unfrequently oversteps the line that divides refinement from vulgarity. With the exactness of a Dutch painter he is apt to spoil his pictures with vulgar detail, and mar his descriptions with prosaic and

commonplace allusions. But, allowing for these defects there remains a large body of powerful poetry which occupies a place of its own in English literature. Crabbe was pre-eminently the poet of the poor. In early life he had lived among them and mingled with their joys and sorrows, and as he grew older, whether in the capacity of a surgeon's assistant, or in the discharge of a clergyman's duty, he must have often witnessed the extremities of sin and suffering which he afterwards so vividly described. He had a purpose, and he made his purpose clear; it was to paint life as he found it, to show human nature to be the same, whether clothed in rags, or robed in purple and fine linen, to trace sin to its consequent suffering and show how easily, if not innocently, humanity may sink lower and lower in the moral scale; and yet to preach forgiveness for repentance to the most wretched and debased, and to offer to the "weary and heavy laden," as from the Judgment-seat in "The Hall of Justice," in the stanza which Sir Walter Scott applied to the deathbed of Meg Merrilies, the consolation of the thought, that,

> "—though seduced and led astray,
> Thou'st travell'd far and wander'd long;
> Thy God hath seen thee all the way,
> And all the turns that led thee wrong."

To the accomplishment of a high moral purpose Crabbe brought a rare combination of powerful qualities. Professor Wilson was right when he said, "The power is almost miraculous with which he has stirred up nature from its very dregs, and shown working in them the common spirit of

humanity." He had vigorous creative skill, remarkable facility of expression, a wonderful knowledge of human nature, and an extraordinary insight into character, which enabled him to analyse motives and trace the secret springs of action: a watchful eye observant of the smallest details, a firm hand that never faltered in the cause of what he believed to be the truth, and a sympathetic heart that ever throbbed on behalf of the desolate and the oppressed. Humour, satire, and pathos were equally at his command;—a humour that is always healthy, a satire that is more sad than savage, and a pathos sometimes perfect; yet so intense in its realism, and so minute in its details, and, withal, so protracted in its descriptions that pity oftentimes becomes pain, and we begin to feel that in dealing with the social sores of humanity the poet has lost himself in the surgeon, and the lancet has taken the place of the pen. Writing in the grey twilight of the dawn of the nineteenth century, his work took its colour from the light of the opening day. From first to last his writings, begun in coldness and gloom, grow less cold and less gloomy, as the day gets more and more strong. In a degenerate age of poetic feeling, he became the prophet of a better time, and as the forerunner of Wordsworth, with all a prophet's boldness, inflexibility, and integrity, spoke "as the voice of one crying in the wilderness," against the hollow artificialism of the "sounding brass" and the "tinkling cymbal," of which time had wearied, and truth become impatient.

ALFRED H. MILES.

THE VILLAGE.

1783.

GEORGE CRABBE.

THE VILLAGE POOR.

FROM BOOK I.

(*First Edition.*)

YE gentle souls who dream of rural ease,
Whom the smooth stream and smoother sonnet please;
Go! if the peaceful cot your praises share,
Go look within, and ask if peace be there:
If peace be his—that drooping weary sire,
Or their's, that offspring round their feeble fire,
Or her's, that matron pale, whose trembling hand
Turns on the wretched hearth th' expiring brand.

Nor yet can time itself obtain for these
Life's latest comforts, due respect and ease;
For yonder see that hoary swain, whose age
Can with no cares except its own engage;
Who, propt on that rude staff, looks up to see
The bare arms broken from the withering tree;
On which, a boy, he climb'd the loftiest bough,
Then his first joy, but his sad emblem now.

He once was chief in all the rustic trade,
His steady hand the straightest furrow made;
Full many a prize he won, and still is proud
To find the triumphs of his youth allow'd;

A transient pleasure sparkles in his eyes,
He hears and smiles, then thinks again and sighs:
For now he journeys to his grave in pain;
The rich disdain him; nay, the poor disdain;
Alternate masters now their slave command,
And urge the[1] efforts of his feeble hand;
Who,[2] when his age attempts its task in vain,
With ruthless taunts of lazy poor complain.

Oft may you see him when he tends the sheep,
His winter charge, beneath the hillock weep;
Oft hear him murmur to the winds that blow
O'er his white locks, and bury them in snow;
When roused by rage and muttering in the morn,
He mends the broken hedge with icy thorn.

"Why do I live, when I desire to be
At once from life and life's long labour free?
Like leaves in spring, the young are blown away,
Without the sorrows of a slow decay;
I, like yon wither'd leaf, remain behind,
Nipt by the frost and shivering in the wind;
There it abides till younger buds come on,
As I, now all my fellow swains are gone;
Then, from the rising generation thrust,
It falls, like me, unnotic'd to the dust.

These fruitful fields, these numerous flocks I see
Are others' gain, but killing cares to me;
To me the children of my youth are lords,
Slow in their gifts[3] but hasty in their words;
Wants of their own demand their care, and who
Feels his own want and succours others too?
A lonely, wretched man, in pain I go,
None need my help and none relieve my woe;

Then let my bones beneath the turf be laid,
And men forget the wretch they would not aid."

Thus groan the old, till by disease opprest,
They taste a final woe, and then they rest.
Their's is yon house that holds the parish poor,
Whose walls of mud scarce bear the broken door;
There, where the putrid vapours flagging, play,
And the dull wheel hums doleful through the day;
There children dwell who know no parents' care,
Parents, who know no children's love, dwell there;
Heart-broken matrons on their joyless bed,
Forsaken wives and mothers never wed;
Dejected widows with unheeded tears,
And crippled age with more than childhood-fears;
The lame, the blind, and, far the happiest they!
The moping idiot, and the madman gay.

Here too the sick their final doom receive,
Here brought, amid the scenes of grief, to grieve;
Where the loud groans from some sad chamber flow,
Mixt with the clamours of the crowd below;
Here, sorrowing, they each kindred sorrow scan,
And the cold charities of man to man:
Whose laws indeed for ruin'd age provide,
And strong compulsion plucks the scrap from pride;
But still that scrap is bought with many a sigh,
And pride embitters what it can't deny.

Say ye, oppress by some fantastic woes,
Some jarring nerve that baffles your repose;
Who press the downy couch, while slaves advance
With timid eye, to read the distant glance;
Who with sad prayers the weary doctor teaze,
To name the nameless ever-new disease;

Who with mock patience dire complaints endure,
Which real pain, and that alone can cure;
How would ye bear in real pain to lie,
Despis'd, neglected, left alone to die?
How would ye bear to draw your latest breath,
Where all that's wretched paves the way for death?

Such is that room which one rude beam divides,
And naked rafters form the sloping sides;
Where the vile bands that bind the thatch are seen,
And lath and mud are all that lie between;
Save one dull pane, that, coarsely patch'd, gives way
To the rude tempest, yet excludes the day:
Here, on a matted flock, with dust o'erspread,
The drooping wretch reclines his languid head;
For him no hand the cordial cup applies,
Nor wipes the tear that stagnates in his eyes;
No friends with soft discourse his pain beguile,
Nor promise hope till sickness wears a smile.

But soon a loud and hasty summons calls,
Shakes the thin roof, and echoes round the walls;
Anon, a figure enters, quaintly neat,
All pride and business, bustle and conceit;
With looks unalter'd by these scenes of woe,
With speed that entering, speaks his haste to go,
He bids the gazing throng around him fly,
And carries fate and physic in his eye;
A potent quack, long vers'd in human ills,
Who first insults the victim whom he kills;
Whose murd'rous hand a drowsy bench protect,
And whose most tender mercy is neglect.

Paid by the parish for attendance here,
He wears contempt upon his sapient sneer;

In haste he seeks the bed where misery lies,
Impatience mark'd in his averted eyes;
And, some habitual queries hurried o'er,
Without reply, he rushes on the door;
His drooping patient, long inur'd to pain,
And long unheeded, knows remonstrance vain;
He ceases now the feeble help to crave
Of man, and mutely hastens to the grave.

But ere his death some pious doubts arise,
Some simple fears which "bold bad" men despise;
Fain would he ask the parish priest to prove
His title certain to the joys above;
For this he sends the murmuring nurse, who calls
The holy stranger to these dismal walls;
And doth not he, the pious man, appear,
He, "passing rich with forty pounds a year"?
Ah! no, a shepherd of a different stock,
And far unlike him, feeds this little flock;
A jovial youth, who thinks his Sunday's task
As much as God or man can fairly ask;
The rest he gives to loves and labours light,
To fields the morning and to feasts the night;
None better skill'd, the noisy pack to guide,
To urge their chase, to cheer them or to chide;
Sure in his shot his game he seldom mist,
And seldom fail'd to win his game at whist:[5]
Then, while such honours bloom around his head,
Shall he sit sadly by the sick man's bed
To raise the hope he feels not, or with zeal
To combat fears that ev'n the pious feel?

Now once again the gloomy scene explore,
Less gloomy now; the bitter hour is o'er,
The man of many sorrows sighs no more.

Up yonder hill, behold how sadly slow
The bier moves winding from the vale below;
There lie the happy dead, from trouble free,
And the glad parish pays the frugal fee;
No more, oh! Death, thy victim starts to hear
Churchwarden stern, or kingly overseer;
No more the farmer gets his humble bow,
Thou art his lord, the best of tyrants thou!

Now to the church behold the mourners come,
Sedately torpid and devoutly dumb;
The village children now their games suspend,
To see the bier that bears their antient friend;
For he was one in all their idle sport,
And like a monarch rul'd their little court;
The pliant bow he form'd, the flying ball,
The bat, the wicket, were his labours all;
Him now they follow to his grave, and stand
Silent and sad, and gazing, hand in hand;
While bending low, their eager eyes explore
The mingled relicks of the parish poor:
The bell tolls late, the moping owl flies round,
Fear marks the flight and magnifies the sound;
The busy priest, detain'd by weightier care,
Defers his duty till the day of prayer;
And waiting long, the crowd retire distrest,
To think a poor man's bones should lie unblest.

LATER RENDERINGS.

1 Urge the weak. 2 And. 3 Cool in their looks.
4 Of man, and silent sinks into the grave.
5 A sportsman keen, he shoots through half the day,
And, skill'd at whist, devotes the night to play.

THE HALL OF JUSTICE.

1798—1807.

GEORGE CRABBE.

PART I.

Confiteor facere hoc annos; sed et altera causa est,
Anxietas animi, continuuesque dolor.
OVID.

(1834 *Edition.*)

MAGISTRATE, VAGRANT, CONSTABLE, etc.

VAGRANT.

TAKE, take away thy barbarous hand,
And let me to thy Master speak;
Remit awhile the harsh command,
And hear me, or my heart will break.

MAGISTRATE.

Fond wretch! and what canst thou relate,
But deeds of sorrow, shame, and sin?
Thy crime is proved, thou know'st thy fate;
But come, thy tale!—begin, begin!—

VAGRANT.

My crime!——This sick'ning child to feed,
I seized the food, your witness saw;
I knew your laws forbade the deed,
But yielded to a stronger law.[1]

Know'st thou, to Nature's great command
All human laws are frail and weak?
Nay! frown not—stay his eager hand,
And hear me, or my heart will break.

In this, th' adopted babe I hold
With anxious fondness to my breast,
My heart's sole comfort I behold,
More dear than life, when life was blest;
I saw her pining, fainting, cold,
I begg'd—but vain was my request.

I saw the tempting food, and seized—
My infant-sufferer found relief;
And, in the pilfer'd treasure pleased,
Smiled on my guilt, and hush'd my grief.

But I have griefs of other kind,
Troubles and sorrows more severe;
Give me to ease my tortur'd mind,
Lend to my woes a patient ear;
And let me—if I may not find
A friend to help—find one to hear.

Yet nameless let me plead—my name
Would only wake the cry of scorn:
A child of sin, conceived in shame,
Brought forth in woe, to misery born,

My mother dead, my father lost,
I wander'd with a vagrant crew;
A common care, a common cost,
Their sorrows and their sins I knew;
With them, by want on error forced,
Like them, I base and guilty grew.

Few are my years, not so my crimes;
The age, which these sad looks declare,
Is Sorrow's work, it is not Time's,
And I am old in shame and care.[2]

Taught to believe the world a place
Where every stranger was a foe,
Train'd in the arts that mark our race,
To what new people could I go?
Could I a better life embrace,
Or live as virtue dictates? No!—

So through the land I wandering went,
And little found of grief or joy;
But lost my bosom's sweet content
When first I loved—the Gipsy-Boy.

A sturdy youth he was and tall,
His looks would all his soul declare;
His piercing eyes were deep and small,
And strongly curl'd his raven-hair.

Yes, AARON had each manly charm,
All in the May of youthful pride,
He scarcely fear'd his father's arm,
And every other arm defied.—

Oft, when they grew in anger warm,
(Whom will not love and power divide?)
I rose, their wrathful souls to calm,
Not yet in sinful combat tried.

His father was our party's chief,
And dark and dreadful was his look;
His presence fill'd my heart with grief,
Although to me he kindly spoke.

With Aaron I delighted went,
His favour was my bliss and pride;
In growing hope our days we spent,
Love growing charms in either spied,
It saw them, all which Nature lent,
It lent them, all which she denied.

Could I the father's kindness prize,
Or grateful looks on him bestow,
Whom I beheld in wrath arise,
When Aaron sunk beneath his blow?

He drove him down with wicked hand,
It was a dreadful sight to see;
Then vex'd him, till he left the land,
And told his cruel love to me;—
The clan were all at his command,
Whatever his command might be.

The night was dark, the lanes were deep,
And one by one they took their way;
He bade me lay me down and sleep,
I only wept and wish'd for day.

Accursed be the love he bore,
Accursed was the force he used,
So let him of his God implore
For mercy, and be so refused!

You frown again,—to show my wrong
Can I in gentle language speak?
My woes are deep, my words are strong,—
And hear me, or my heart will break.

MAGISTRATE.

I hear thy words, I feel thy pain;
Forbear awhile to speak thy woes;
Receive our aid, and then again
The story of thy life disclose.

For, though seduced and led astray,
Thou'st travell'd far and wander'd long;
Thy God hath seen thee all the way,
And all the turns that led thee wrong.

Part II.

Quandam ridentes oculi, nunc fonte perenni
Deplorant pœnas nocte dieque suas.
Corn. Galli Eleg.

MAGISTRATE.

Come, now again thy woes impart,
Tell all thy sorrows, all thy sin;
We cannot heal the throbbing heart
Till we discern the wounds within.

Compunction weeps our guilt away,
The sinner's safety is his pain;
Such pangs for our offences pay,
And these severer griefs are gain.

VAGRANT.

The son came back—he found us wed,
Then dreadful was the oath he swore;—
His way through Blackburn Forest led,—
His father we beheld no more.

Of all our daring clan not one
Would on the doubtful subject dwell;
For all esteem'd the injured son,
And fear'd the tale which he could tell.

But I had mightier cause for fear,
For slow and mournful round my bed
I saw a dreadful form appear,—
It came when I and Aaron wed.

Yes! we were wed, I know my crime,—
We slept beneath the elmin tree;
But I was grieving all the time,
And Aaron frown'd my tears to see.

For he not yet had felt the pain
That rankles in a wounded breast;
He waked to sin, then slept again,
Forsook his God, yet took his rest.—

But I was forced to feign delight,
And joy in mirth and music sought,—
And mem'ry now recalls the night,
With such surprise and horror fraught,
That reason felt a moment's flight,
And left a mind to madness wrought.

When waking, on my heaving breast
I felt a hand as cold as death:
A sudden fear my voice suppress'd,
A chilling terror stopp'd my breath.—

I seem'd—no words can utter how!
For there my father-husband stood,—

And thus he said :—"Will God allow,
The great Avenger just and Good,
A wife to break her marriage vow?
A son to shed his father's blood?"

I trembled at the dismal sounds,
But vainly strove a word to say;
So, pointing to his bleeding wounds,
The threat'ning spectre stalk'd away.

I brought a lovely daughter forth,
His father's child, in Aaron's bed;
He took her from me in his wrath,
"Where is my child?"—"Thy child is dead."

'Twas false—we wander'd far and wide,
Through town and country, field and fen,
Till Aaron, fighting, fell and died,
And I became a wife again.

I then was young:—my husband sold
My fancied charms for wicked price;
He gave me oft for sinful gold,
The slave, but not the friend of vice :—
Behold me, Heaven! my pains behold,
And let them for my sins suffice!

The wretch who lent me thus for gain,
Despised me when my youth was fled;
Then came disease, and brought me pain :—
Come, Death, and bear me to the dead!
For though I grieve, my grief is vain,
And fruitless all the tears I shed.

True, I was not to virtue train'd,
Yet well I knew my deeds were ill;

By each offence my heart was pain'd,
I wept, but I offended still;
My better thoughts my life disdain'd,
But yet the viler led my will.

My husband died, and now no more
My smile was sought, or ask'd my hand,
A widow'd vagrant, vile and poor,
Beneath a vagrant's vile command.

Ceaseless I roved the country round,
To win my bread by fraudful arts,
And long a poor subsistence found,
By spreading nets for simple hearts.

Though poor, and abject, and despised,
Their fortunes to the crowd I told;
I gave the young the love they prized,
And promised wealth to bless the old;
Schemes for the doubtful I devised,
And charms for the forsaken sold.

At length for arts like these confined
In prison with a lawless crew,
I soon perceived a kindred mind,
And there my long-lost daughter knew;

His father's child, whom Aaron gave
To wander with a distant clan,
The miseries of the world to brave,
And be the slave of vice and man.

She knew my name—we met in pain,
Our parting pangs can I express?
She sail'd a convict o'er the main,
And left an heir to her distress.

This is that heir to shame and pain,
For whom I only could descry
A world of trouble and disdain:
Yet, could I bear to see her die,
Or stretch her feeble hands in vain,
And, weeping, beg of me supply?

No! though the fate thy mother knew
Was shameful! shameful though thy race
Have wander'd all a lawless crew,
Outcasts despised in every place;

Yet as the dark and muddy tide,
When far from its polluted source,
Becomes more pure and purified,
Flows in a clear and happy course;

In thee, dear infant! so may end
Our shame, in thee our sorrows cease!
And thy pure course will then extend,
In floods of joy, o'er vales of peace.

Oh! by the God who loves to spare,
Deny me not the boon I crave;
Let this loved child your mercy share,
And let me find a peaceful grave;

Make her yet spotless soul your care,
And let my sins their portion have;
Her for a better fate prepare,
And punish whom 'twere sin to save!"

MAGISTRATE.

Recall the word, renounce the thought,
Command thy heart and bend thy knee.
There is to all a pardon brought,
A ransom rich, assured and free;
'Tis full when found, 'tis found if sought,
Oh! seek it, till 'tis seal'd to thee.

VAGRANT.

But how my pardon shall I know?

MAGISTRATE.

By feeling dread that 'tis not sent,
By tears for sin that freely flow,
By grief, that all thy tears are spent,
By thoughts on that great debt we owe,
With all the mercy GOD has lent,
By suffering what thou canst not show,
Yet showing how thine heart is rent,
Till thou canst feel thy bosom glow,
And say, "MY SAVIOUR, I REPENT!"

ORIGINAL MS. VARIATIONS.

1 What is my crime? a deed of love;
I fed my child with pilfer'd food:
Your laws will not the act approve,
The law of Nature deems it good.

2 My years, indeed, are sad and few,
Though weak these limbs, and shrunk this frame:
For Grief has done what Time should do;
And I am old in care and shame.

THE PARISH REGISTER.

1799 1807.

GEORGE CRABBE.

I.

OPENING LINES.

From Part I.—Baptisms.

(1834 *Edition.*)

THE year revolves, and I again explore
The simple Annals of my Parish poor;
What Infant-members in my flock appear,
What Pairs I bless'd in the departed year;
And who, of Old or Young, or Nymphs or Swains,
Are lost to Life, its pleasures and its pains.

II.

THE FRUGAL POOR.

Next, with their boy, a decent couple came,
And call'd him Robert, 'twas his father's name;
Three girls preceded, all by time endear'd,
And future births were neither hoped nor fear'd:
Blest in each other, but to no excess,
Health, quiet, comfort, form'd their happiness;
Love all made up of torture and delight,
Was but mere madness in this couple's sight:
Susan could think, though not without a sigh,
If she were gone, who should her place supply;
And Robert, half in earnest, half in jest,
Talk of her spouse when he should be at rest:

Yet strange would either think it to be told,
Their love was cooling or their hearts were cold.
Few were their acres,—but, with these content,
They were, each pay-day, ready with their rent:
And few their wishes—what their farm denied,
The neighbouring town, at trifling cost, supplied.
If at the draper's window Susan cast
A longing look, as with her goods she pass'd,
And, with the produce of the wheel and churn,
Bought her a Sunday-robe on her return;
True to her maxim, she would take no rest,
Till care repaid that portion to the chest:
Or if, when loitering at the Whitsun-fair,
Her Robert spent some idle shillings there;
Up at the barn, before the break of day,
He made his labour for th' indulgence pay:
Thus both—that waste itself might work in vain—
Wrought double tides, and all was well again.

Yet, though so prudent, there were times of joy,
(The day they wed, the christening of the boy,)
When to the wealthier farmers there was shown
Welcome unfeign'd, and plenty like their own;
For Susan served the great, and had some pride
Among our topmost people to preside:
Yet in that plenty, in that welcome free,
There was the guiding nice frugality,
That, in the festal as the frugal day,
Has, in a different mode, a sovereign sway;
As tides the same attractive influence know,
In the least ebb and in their proudest flow;
The wise frugality, that does not give
A life to saving, but that saves to live;
Sparing, not pinching, mindful though not mean,
O'er all presiding, yet in nothing seen.

III.

THE POOR FARMER.

To farmers three, the year has given a son,
Finch on the Moor, and *French*, and *Middleton.*
Twice in this year a female *Giles* I see,
A *Spalding* once, and once a *Barnaby* :—
A humble man is *he*, and, when they meet
Our farmers find him on a distant seat;
There for their wit he serves a constant theme,—
"They praise his dairy, they extol his team,
They ask the price of each unrivall'd steed,
And whence his sheep, that admirable breed?
His thriving arts they beg he would explain,
And where he puts the money he must gain.
They have their daughters, but they fear their friend
Would think his sons too much would condescend;—
They have their sons who would their fortunes try,
But fear his daughters will their suit deny."
So runs the joke, while James, with sigh profound,
And face of care, looks moveless on the ground;
His cares, his sighs, provoke the insult more,
And point the jest—for Barnaby is poor.

IV.

CLOSING LINES.

These have we named; on life's rough sea they sail,
With many a prosperous, many an adverse gale!
Where passion soon, like powerful winds, will rage,
And prudence, wearied, with their strength engage:
Then each, in aid, shall some companion ask,
For help or comfort in the tedious task;
And what that help—what joys from union flow,
What good or ill, we next prepare to show;
And row, meantime, our weary bark ashore,
As Spenser his—but not with Spenser's oar.

V.

PHŒBE DAWSON.

From Part II.—Marriages.

(1834 *Edition.*)

TWO summers since I saw at Lammas Fair,
The sweetest flower that ever blossom'd there,
When *Phœbe Dawson* gaily cross'd the Green,
In haste to see and happy to be seen:
Her air, her manners, all who saw admired;
Courteous though coy, and gentle though retired;
The joy of youth and health her eyes display'd,
And ease of heart her every look convey'd;
A native skill her simple robes express'd,
As with untutor'd elegance she dress'd;
The lads around admired so fair a sight,
And Phœbe felt, and felt she gave, delight.
Admirers soon of every age she gain'd,
Her beauty won them and her worth retain'd;
Envy itself could no contempt display,
They wish'd her well, whom yet they wish'd away.
Correct in thought, she judged a servant's place
Preserved a rustic beauty from disgrace;
But yet on Sunday-eve, in freedom's hour,
With secret joy she felt that beauty's power,
When some proud bliss upon the heart would steal
That, poor or rich, a beauty still must feel.—

At length the youth ordain'd to move her breast,
Before the swains with bolder spirit press'd;
With looks less timid made his passion known,
And pleased by manners most unlike her own;

Loud though in love, and confident though young;
Fierce in his air, and voluble of tongue;
By trade a tailor, though, in scorn of trade,
He served the 'Squire, and brush'd the coat he made.
Yet now, would Phœbe her consent afford,
Her slave alone, again he'd mount the board;
With her should years of growing love be spent,
And growing wealth:—she sigh'd and look'd consent.

Now, through the lane, up hill, and 'cross the green,
(Seen by but few, and blushing to be seen—
Dejected, thoughtful, anxious, and afraid,)
Led by the lover, walk'd the silent maid,
Slow through the meadows roved they, many a mile,
Toy'd by each bank, and trifled at each stile;
Where, as he painted every blissful view,
And highly colour'd what he strongly drew,
The pensive damsel, prone to tender fears,
Dimm'd the false prospect with prophetic tears.—
Thus pass'd th' allotted hours, till lingering late,
The lover loiter'd at the master's gate;
There he pronounced adieu! and yet would stay,
Till chidden—soothed—entreated—forced away;
He would of coldness, though indulged, complain,
And oft retire, and oft return again;
When, if his teasing vex'd her gentle mind,
The grief assumed, compell'd her to be kind!
For he would proof of plighted kindness crave,
That she resented first and then forgave,
And to his grief and penance yielded more
Than his presumption had required before.—

Ah! fly temptation, youth; refrain! refrain!
Each yielding maid and each presuming swain!

Lo! now with red rent cloak and bonnet black,
And torn green gown loose hanging at her back,
One who an infant in her arms sustains,
And seems in patience striving with her pains;
Pinch'd are her looks, as one who pines for bread,
Whose cares are growing and whose hopes are fled;
Pale her parch'd lips, her heavy eyes sunk low,
And tears unnoticed from their channels flow;
Serene her manner, till some sudden pain
Frets the meek soul, and then she's calm again;—
Her broken pitcher to the pool she takes,
And every step with cautious terror makes;
For not alone that infant in her arms,
But nearer cause, her anxious soul alarms.
With water burthen'd, then she picks her way,
Slowly and cautious, in the clinging clay;
Till, in mid-green, she trusts a place unsound,
And deeply plunges in th' adhesive ground;
Thence, but with pain, her slender foot she takes,
While hope the mind as strength the frame, forsakes:
For when so full the cup of sorrow grows,
Add but a drop, it instantly o'erflows.
And now her path but not her peace she gains,
Safe from her task, but shivering with her pains;
Her home she reaches, open leaves the door,
And placing first her infant on the floor,
She bares her bosom to the wind, and sits.
And sobbing struggles with the rising fits:
In vain, they come, she feels the inflating grief,
That shuts the swelling bosom from relief;
That speaks in feeble cries a soul distress'd,
Or the sad laugh that cannot be repress'd.
The neighbour-matron leaves her wheel and flies
With all the aid her poverty supplies;

Unfee'd, the calls of Nature she obeys,
Not led by profit, not allured by praise;
And waiting long, till these contentions cease,
She speaks of comfort, and departs in peace.
Friend of distress! the mourner feels thy aid,
She cannot pay thee, but thou wilt be paid.

But who this child of weakness, want and care?
'Tis *Phœbe Dawson*, pride of Lammas Fair:
Who took her lover for his sparkling eyes,
Expressions warm, and love-inspiring lies:
Compassion first assail'd her gentle heart,
For all his suffering, all his bosom's smart:
"And then his prayers! they would a savage move,
And win the coldest of the sex to love:"—
But ah! too soon his looks success declared,
Too late her loss the marriage-rite repair'd;
The faithless flatterer then his vows forgot,
A captious tyrant or a noisy sot:
If present, railing, till he saw her pain'd;
If absent, spending what their labours gain'd;
Till that fair form in want and sickness pined,
And hope and comfort fled that gentle mind.

Then fly temptation, youth; resist, refrain!
Nor let me preach for ever and in vain!

VI.

A NOBLE PEASANT.

From Part III.—Burials.

(1834 *Edition.*)

NEXT to these ladies, but in naught allied,
A noble Peasant, *Isaac Ashford*, died.
Noble he was, contemning all things mean,
His truth unquestion'd and his soul serene:
Of no man's presence Isaac felt afraid;
At no man's question Isaac look'd dismay'd:
Shame knew him not, he dreaded no disgrace;
Truth, simple truth, was written in his face;
Yet while the serious thought his soul approved,
Cheerful he seem'd, and gentleness he loved,
To bliss domestic he his heart resign'd,
And with the firmest had the fondest mind:
Were others joyful, he look'd smiling on,
And gave allowance where he needed none;
Good he refused with future ill to buy,
Nor knew a joy that caused reflection's sigh;
A friend to virtue, his unclouded breast
No envy stung, no jealousy distress'd;
(Bane of the poor! it wounds their weaker mind,
To miss one favour, which their neighbours find:)
Yet far was he from stoic pride removed;
He felt humanely, and he warmly loved:
I mark'd his action, when his infant died,
And his old neighbour for offence was tried;
The still tears, stealing down that furrow'd cheek,
Spoke pity, plainer than the tongue can speak.

If pride were his, 'twas not their vulgar pride
Who, in their base contempt, the great deride;
Nor pride in learning,—though my Clerk agreed,
If fate should call him, Ashford might succeed;
Nor pride in rustic skill, although we knew,
None his superior, and his equals few:—
But if that spirit in his soul had place,
It was the jealous pride that shuns disgrace;
A pride in honest fame, by virtue gain'd,
In sturdy boys to virtuous labours train'd;
Pride in the power that guards his country's coast,
And all that Englishmen enjoy and boast;
Pride, in a life that slander's tongue defied,—
In fact a noble passion, misnamed Pride.

He had no party's rage, no sect'ry's whim:
Christian and countrymen was all with him:
True to his church he came; no Sunday-shower
Kept him at home in that important hour;
Nor his firm feet could one persuading sect,
By the strong glare of their new light direct;—
"On hope, in mine own sober light, I gaze,
But should be blind, and lose it, in your blaze."

In times severe, when many a sturdy swain
Felt it his pride, his comfort, to complain;
Isaac their wants would soothe, his own would hide
And feel in *that* his comfort and his pride.

At length he found, when seventy years were run,
His strength departed, and his labour done;
When he, save honest fame, retain'd no more,
But lost his wife, and saw his children poor:
'Twas then, a spark of—say not discontent—
Struck on his mind, and thus he gave it vent:—

"Kind are your laws, ('tis not to be denied,)
That in yon House, for ruin'd age, provide,
And they are just;—when young, we give you all,
And for assistance in our weakness call.—
Why then this proud reluctance to be fed,
To join your poor, and eat the parish-bread?
But yet I linger, loth with him to feed,
Who gains his plenty by the sons of need;
He who, by contract, all your paupers took,
And gauges stomachs with an anxious look:
On some old master I could well depend;
See him with joy and thank him as a friend;
But ill on him, who doles the day's supply,
And counts our chances who at night may die:
Yet help me, Heav'n! and let me not complain
Of what I suffer, but my fate sustain."

Such were his thoughts, and so resign'd he grew;
Daily he placed the Workhouse in his view!
But came not there, for sudden was his fate,
He dropp'd, expiring, at his cottage gate.

I feel his absence in the hours of prayer,
And view his seat and sigh for Isaac there;
I see no more those white locks thinly spread
Round the bald polish of that honour'd head;
No more that awful glance on playful wight,
Compell'd to kneel and tremble at the sight,
To fold his fingers, all in dread the while,
Till Mister Ashford soften'd to a smile;
No more that meek and suppliant look in prayer,
Nor the pure faith (to give it force), are there:—
But he is blest, and I lament no more
A wise good man contented to be poor.

SIR EUSTACE GREY.

1804-5.

GEORGE CRABBE.

Scene.—A MADHOUSE.

Persons.—VISITOR, PHYSICIAN, AND PATIENT.

"Veris miscens falsa."—
SENECA, *in Herc. furente.*

"In the story of Sir Eustace Grey, an attempt is made to describe the wanderings of a mind first irritated by the consequences of error and misfortune, and afterwards soothed by a species of enthusiastic conversion, still keeping him insane: a task very difficult, and if the presumption of the attempt may find pardon, it will not be refused to the failure of the poet. It is said of our Shakespeare, respecting madness; 'In that circle none dare walk but he:'—yet be it granted to one, who dares not to pass the boundary fixed for common minds, at least to step near to the tremendous verge and form some idea of the terrors that are stalking in the interdicted space."—*Preface to first edition of Poems*, 1807. GEORGE CRABBE.

(1834 *Edition.*)

VISITOR.

I'LL know no more;—the heart is torn
By views of woe, we cannot heal;
Long shall I see these things forlorn,
And oft again their griefs shall feel,
As each upon the mind shall steal;
That wan projector's mystic style,
That lumpish idiot leering by,
That peevish idler's ceaseless wile,
And that poor maiden's half-form'd smile,

While struggling for the full-drawn sigh !—
I'll know no more.

PHYSICIAN.

—Yes, turn again ;
Then speed to happier scenes thy way,
When thou hast view'd what yet remain,
The ruins of Sir Eustace Grey,
The sport of madness, misery's prey :
But he will no historian need,
His cares, his crimes, will he display,
And show (as one from frenzy freed)
The proud lost mind, the rash-done deed.

That cell to him is Greyling Hall :—
Approach ; he'll bid thee welcome there ;
Will sometimes for his servant call,
And sometimes point the vacant chair ;
He can, with free and easy air,
Appear attentive and polite ;
Can veil his woes in manners fair,
And pity with respect excite.

PATIENT.

Who comes ?—Approach !—'tis kindly done :—
My learn'd physician, and a friend,
Their pleasures quit, to visit one
Who cannot to their ease attend,[1]
Nor joys bestow, nor comforts lend,
As when I lived so blest, so well,
And dreamt not I must soon contend
With those malignant powers of hell.

PHYSICIAN.

" Less warmth, Sir Eustace, or we go."—

PATIENT.

See! I am calm as infant-love,
A very child, but one of woe
Whom you should pity, not reprove:—
But men at ease, who never strove
With passions wild, will calmly show,
How soon we may their ills remove,
And masters of their madness grow.

Some twenty years, I think, are gone,—
(Time flies, I know not how, away,)
The sun upon no happier shone,
Nor prouder man, than Eustace Grey.
Ask where you would, and all would say,
The man admired and praised of all,
By rich and poor, by grave and gay,
Was the young lord of Greyling Hall.

Yes! I had youth and rosy health;
Was nobly form'd, as man might be;
For sickness, then, of all my wealth,
I never gave a single fee:
The ladies fair, the maidens free,
Were all accustom'd then to say,
Who would a handsome figure see
Should look upon Sir Eustace Grey.

He had a frank and pleasant look,
A cheerful eye and accent bland;
His very speech and manner spoke
The generous heart, the open hand;
About him all was gay or grand,
He had the praise of great and small;
He bought, improved, projected, plann'd,
And reign'd a prince at Greyling Hall.

My lady!—she was all we love;
All praise (to speak her worth) is faint;
Her manners show'd the yielding dove,
Her morals, the seraphic saint:
She never breath'd nor look'd complaint;
No equal upon earth had she:—
Now, what is this fair thing I paint?
Alas! as all that live shall be.[2]

There was, beside, a gallant youth,
And him my bosom's friend, I had;—
Oh! I was rich in very truth,
It made me proud—it made me mad!—
Yes, I was lost—but there was cause!
Where stood my tale?—I cannot find—
But I had all mankind's applause,
And all the smiles of womankind.

There were two cherub-things beside,
A gracious girl, a glorious boy;
Yet more to swell my full-blown pride,
To varnish higher my fading joy,
Pleasures were ours without alloy,
Nay, Paradise,—till my frail Eve
Our bliss was tempted to destroy—
Deceived and fated to deceive.

But I deserved;—for all that time,
When I was loved, admired, caress'd,
There was within, each secret crime,
Unfelt, uncancell'd, unconfess'd;
I never then my God address'd,
In grateful praise or humble prayer;
And if His Word was not my jest—
(Dread thought!) it never was my care.

I doubted :—fool I was to doubt!
If that all-piercing eye could see,—
If He who looks all worlds throughout,
Would so minute and careful be,
As to perceive and punish me :—
With man I would be great and high,
But with my God so lost, that He,
In His large view, should pass me by.[3]

Thus blest with children, friend, and wife,
Blest far beyond the vulgar lot;
Of all that gladdens human life,
Where was the good, that I had not?
But my vile heart had sinful spot,
And Heaven beheld its deep'ning stain;
Eternal justice I forgot,
And mercy sought not to obtain.

Come near,—I'll softly speak the rest!—
Alas! 'tis known to all the crowd,
Her guilty love was all confess'd;
And his, who so much truth avow'd,
My faithless friend's.—In pleasure proud
I sat, when these cursed tidings came;
Their guilt, their flight was told aloud,
And Envy smiled to hear my shame!

I call'd on Vengeance; at the word
She came :—Can I the deed forget?
I held the sword—the accursed sword
The blood of his false heart made wet;
And that fair victim paid her debt,
She pined, she died, she loath'd to live;—
I saw her dying—see her yet:
Fair fallen thing! my rage forgive!

Those cherubs still, my life to bless,
Were left; could I my fears remove,
Sad fears that check'd each fond caress,
And poison'd all parental love?
Yet that with jealous feelings strove,
And would at last have won my will,
Had I not, wretch! been doom'd to prove
Th' extremes of mortal good and ill.

In youth! health! joy! in beauty's pride!
They droop'd—as flowers when blighted bow;
The dire infection came:—they died,
And I was cursed—as I am now—
Nay, frown not, angry friend,—allow
That I was deeply, sorely tried;
Hear then, and you must wonder how
I could such storms and strifes abide.[4]

Storms!—not that clouds embattled make,
When they afflict this earthly globe;
But such as with their terrors shake
Man's breast, and to the bottom probe;
They make the hypocrite disrobe,
They try us all, if false or true;
For this one Devil had power on Job;
And I was long the slave of two.

PHYSICIAN.

Peace, peace, my friend; these subjects fly;
Collect thy thoughts—go calmly on.—

PATIENT.

And shall I then the fact deny?
I was,—thou know'st,—I was begone,

Like him who fill'd the eastern throne,
To whom the Watcher cried aloud;
That royal wretch of Babylon,
Who was so guilty and so proud.

Like him, with haughty, stubborn mind,
I, in my state, my comforts sought;
Delight and praise I hoped to find,
In what I builded, planted, bought!
Oh! arrogance! by misery taught—
Soon came a voice! I felt it come;
"Full be his cup, with evil fraught,
Demons his guides, and death his doom!"

Then was I cast from out my state;
Two fiends of darkness led my way;
They waked me early, watch'd me late,
My dread by night, my plague by day!
Oh! I was made their sport, their play,
Through many a stormy troubled year;
And how they used their passive prey
Is sad to tell:—but you shall hear.

And first before they sent me forth,
Through this unpitying world to run,
They robb'd Sir Eustace of his worth,
Lands, manors, lordships, every one;
So was that gracious man undone,
Was spurn'd as vile, was scorn'd as poor,
Whom every former friend would shun,
And menials drove from every door.

Then those ill-favour'd Ones, whom none
But my unhappy eyes could view,
Led me, with wild emotion, on,
And, with resistless terror, drew.
Through lands we fled, o'er seas we flew,
And halted on a boundless plain;
Where nothing fed, nor breathed, nor grew,
But silence ruled the still domain.

Upon that boundless plain, below,
The setting sun's last rays were shed,
And gave a mild and sober glow,
Where all were still, asleep, or dead;
Vast ruins in the midst were spread,
Pillars and pediments sublime,
Where the grey moss had form'd a bed,
And clothed the crumbling spoils of time.

There was I fix'd I know not how,
Condemn'd for untold years to stay:
Yet years were not;—one dreadful *Now*
Endured no change of night or day;
The same mild evening's sleeping ray
Shone softly, solemn and serene,
And all that time I gazed away,
The setting sun's sad rays were seen.

At length a moment's sleep stole on,—
Again came my commission'd foes;
Again through sea and land we're gone,
No peace, no respite, no repose:
Above the dark broad sea we rose,
We ran through bleak and frozen land;
I had no strength their strength t' oppose,
An infant in a giant's hand.

They placed me where those streamers play,
Those nimble beams of brilliant light;
It would the stoutest heart dismay,
To see, to feel, that dreadful sight:
So swift, so pure, so cold, so bright,
They pierced my frame with icy wound;
And all that half-year's polar night,
These dancing streamers wrapp'd me round.

Slowly that darkness pass'd away,
When down upon the earth I fell,—
Some hurried sleep was mine by day;
But, soon as toll'd the evening bell,
They forced me on, where ever dwell
Far-distant men in cities fair,
Cities of whom no travellers tell,
Nor feet but mine were wanderers there.

Their watchmen stare, and stand aghast,
As on we hurry through the dark;
The watch-light blinks as we go past,
The watch-dog shrinks and fears to bark;
The watch-tower's bell sounds shrill; and, hark!
The free wind blows—we've left the town—
A wide sepulchral ground I mark,
And on a tombstone place me down.

What monuments of mighty dead!
What tombs of various kind are found!
And stones erect their shadows shed
On humble graves, with wickers bound.
Some risen fresh, above the ground,
Some level with the native clay:
What sleeping millions wait the sound,
"Arise, ye dead, and come away!"

Alas! they stay not for that call;
Spare me this woe! ye demons, spare!—
They come! the shrouded shadows all,—
'Tis more than mortal brain can bear;
Rustling they rise, they sternly glare
At man upheld by vital breath;
Who, led by wicked fiends, should dare
To join the shadowy troops of death!

Yes, I have felt all man can feel,
Till he shall pay his nature's debt;
Ills that no hope has strength to heal,
No mind the comfort to forget:
Whatever cares the heart can fret,
The spirits wear, the temper gall,
Woe, want, dread, anguish, all beset
My sinful soul!—together all![5]

Those fiends upon a shaking fen
Fix'd me, in dark tempestuous night;
There never trod the foot of men,
There flock'd the fowl in wint'ry flight;
There danced the moor's deceitful light
Above the pool where sedges grow;
And when the morning-sun shone bright,
It shone upon a field of snow.

They hung me on a bough so small,
The rook could build her nest no higher;
They fix'd me on the trembling ball
That crowns the steeple's quiv'ring spire;
They set me where the seas retire,
But drown with their returning tide;
And made me flee the mountain's fire,
When rolling from its burning side.

I've hung upon the ridgy steep
Of cliffs, and held the rambling brier;
I've plunged below the billowy deep,
Where air was sent me to respire;
I've been where hungry wolves retire;
And (to complete my woes) I've ran
Where Bedlam's crazy crew conspire
Against the life of reasoning man.

I've furl'd in storms the flapping sail,
By hanging from the topmast-head;
I've served the vilest slaves in jail,
And pick'd the dunghill's spoil for bread;
I've made the badger's hole my bed,
I've wander'd with a gipsy crew;
I've dreaded all the guilty dread,
And done what they would fear to do.

On sand, where ebbs and flows the flood,
Midway they placed and bade me die;
Propt on my staff, I stoutly stood
When the swift waves came rolling by;
And high they rose, and still more high,
Till my lips drank the bitter brine;
I sobb'd convulsed, then cast mine eye,
And saw the tide's re-flowing sign.

And then, my dreams were such as nought
Could yield but my unhappy case;
I've been of thousand devils caught,
And thrust into that horrid place,
Where reign dismay, despair, disgrace;
Furies with iron fangs were there,
To torture that accursed race,
Doom'd to dismay, disgrace, despair.

Harmless I was; yet hunted down
For treasons, to my soul unfit;
I've been pursued through many a town,
For crimes that petty knaves commit;
I've been adjudged t' have lost my wit,
Because I preach'd so loud and well;
And thrown into the dungeon's pit,
For trampling on the pit of hell.

Such were the evils, man of sin,
That I was fated to sustain;
And add to all, without—within,
A soul defiled with every stain
That man's reflecting mind can pain;
That pride, wrong, rage, despair, can make;
In fact, they'd nearly touch'd my brain,
And reason on her throne would shake.

But pity will the vilest seek,
If punish'd guilt will not repine,—
I heard a heavenly Teacher speak,
And felt the Sun of Mercy shine:
I hail'd the light! the birth divine!
And then was seal'd among the few;
Those angry fiends beheld the sign,
And from me in an instant flew.

Come hear how thus the charmers cry
To wandering sheep, the strays of sin,
While some the wicket-gate pass by,
And some will knock and enter in:
Full joyful 'tis a soul to win,
For he that winneth souls is wise;
Now hark! the holy strains begin,
And thus the sainted preacher cries:—

"Pilgrim, burthen'd with thy sin,
Come the way to Zion's gate,
There, till Mercy let thee in,
Knock and weep and watch and wait.
Knock!—He knows the sinner's cry:
Weep!—He loves the mourner's tears:
Watch!—for saving grace is nigh:
Wait,—till heavenly light appears.

"Hark! it is the Bridegroom's voice;
Welcome, pilgrim, to thy rest;
Now within the gate rejoice,
Safe and seal'd and bought and blest!
Safe—from all the lures of vice,
Seal'd—by signs the chosen know,
Bought—by love and life the price,
Blest—the mighty debt to owe.

"Holy Pilgrim! what for thee
In a world like this remain?
From thy guarded breast shall flee
Fear and shame, and doubt and pain.
Fear—the hope of Heaven shall fly,
Shame—from glory's view retire,
Doubt—in certain rapture die,
Pain—in endless bliss expire."

But though my day of grace was come,
Yet still my days of grief I find;
The former clouds' collected gloom
Still sadden the reflecting mind;
The soul, to evil things consign'd,
Will of their evil some retain;
The man will seem to earth inclined,
And will not look erect again.

Thus, though elect, I feel it hard
To lose what I possess'd before,
To be from all my wealth debarr'd,—
The brave Sir Eustace is no more:
But old I wax and passing poor,
Stern, rugged men my conduct view;
They chide my wish, they bar my door,
'Tis hard—I weep—you see I do.—

Must you, my friends, no longer stay?
Thus quickly all my pleasures end;
But I'll remember, when I pray,
My kind physician and his friend;
And those sad hours, you deign to spend
With me, I shall requite them all;
Sir Eustace for his friends shall send,
And thank their love at Greyling Hall.

VISITOR.

The poor Sir Eustace!—Yet his hope
Leads him to think of joys again;
And when his earthly visions droop,
His views of heavenly kind remain:—
But whence that meek and humbled strain,
That spirit wounded, lost, resign'd?
Would not so proud a soul disdain
The madness of the poorest mind?

PHYSICIAN.

No! for the more he swell'd with pride,
The more he felt misfortune's blow;
Disgrace and grief he could not hide,
And poverty had laid him low:

Thus shame and sorrow working slow,
At length this humble spirit gave;
Madness on these began to grow,
And bound him to his fiends a slave.

Though the wild thoughts had touch'd his brain,
Then was he free:—So, forth he ran;
To soothe or threat, alike were vain:
He spake of fiends; look'd wild and wan;
Year after year, the hurried man
Obey'd those fiends from place to place;
Till his religious change began
To form a frenzied child of grace.

For, as the fury lost its strength,
The mind reposed; by slow degrees
Came lingering hope, and brought at length,
To the tormented spirit, ease:
This slave of sin, whom fiends could seize,
Felt or believed their power had end;—
"'Tis faith," he cried, "my bosom frees,
And now my SAVIOUR is my friend."

But ah! though time can yield relief,
And soften woes it cannot cure;
Would we not suffer pain and grief,
To have our reason sound and sure?
Then let us keep our bosoms pure,
Our fancy's favourite flights suppress;
Prepare the body to endure,
And bend the mind to meet distress;
And then HIS guardian care implore,
Whom demons dread and men adore.

ORIGINAL MS. VARIATIONS.

(*SIR EUSTACE GREY.*)

1 Who comes?—Approach!—'tis kindly done —
The worthy doctor, and a friend,
'Tis more than kind to visit one
Who has not now to spare or spend,

2 Worms, doctor, worms, and so are we.

3 [Here follows in the original MS.:—
Madman! shall He who made this all,
The parts that form the whole reject?
Is aught with him so great or small,
He cannot punish or protect?
Man's folly may his crimes neglect,
And hope the eye of God to shun;
But there's of all the account correct,—
Not one omitted,—no, not one.]

4 Nay, frown not—chide not—but allow
Pity to one so sorely tried:
But I am calm—to fate I bow,
And all the storms of life abide.

5 Yes, I have felt all man can feel,
Till he shall pay his nature's debt;
Ills that no medicines can heal,
And griefs that no man can forget;
Whatever cares the mind can fret,
The spirits wear, the bosom gall,
Pain, hunger, prison, duns, and debt,
Foul-fiends and fear,—I've felt ye all.

THE BOROUGH.

1810.

GEORGE CRABBE.

I.

THE SEA.

FROM LETTER I.

(1834 *Edition.*)

I. CALM.

TURN to the watery world !—but who to thee
(A wonder yet unview'd) shall paint—the Sea ?
Various and vast, sublime in all its forms,
When lull'd by zephyrs, or when roused by storms,
Its colours changing, when from clouds and sun
Shades after shades upon the surface run ;
Embrown'd and horrid now, and now serene,
In limpid blue, and evanescent green ;
And oft the foggy banks on ocean lie,
Lift the fair sail, and cheat th' experienced eye.

Be it the Summer noon : a sandy space
The ebbing tide has left upon its place ;
Then just the hot and stony beach above,
Light twinkling streams in bright confusion move ;
(For heated thus, the warmer air ascends,
And with the cooler in its fall contends)—
Then the broad bosom of the ocean keeps
An equal motion ; swelling as it sleeps,
Then slowly sinking ; curling to the strand,
Faint, lazy waves o'ercreep the ridgy sand,

Or tap the tarry boat with gentle blow,
And back return in silence, smooth and slow.
Ships in the calm seem anchor'd; for they glide
On the still sea, urged solely by the tide:
Art thou not present, this calm scene before,
Where all beside is pebbly length of shore,
And far as eye can reach, it can discern no more!

Yet sometimes comes a ruffling cloud to make
The quiet surface of the ocean shake;
As an awaken'd giant with a frown
Might show his wrath, and then to sleep sink down.

II. STORM.

View now the Winter storm! above, one cloud,
Black and unbroken, all the skies o'ershroud;
Th' unwieldy porpoise through the day before
Had roll'd in view of boding men on shore;
And sometimes hid and sometimes show'd his form,
Dark as the cloud, and furious as the storm.

All where the eye delights, yet dreads to roam,
The breaking billows cast the flying foam
Upon the billows rising—all the deep
In restless change; the waves so swell'd and steep,
Breaking and sinking, and the sunken swells,
Nor one, one moment, in its station dwells:
But nearer land you may the billows trace,
As if contending in their watery chase;
May watch the mightiest till the shoal they reach,
Then break and hurry to their utmost stretch;
Curl'd as they come, they strike with furious force,
And then re-flowing, take their grating course,
Raking the rounded flints, which ages past
Roll'd by their rage, and shall to ages last.

Far off the Petrel in the troubled way
Swims with her brood, or flutters in the spray;
She rises often, often drops again,
And sports at ease on the tempestuous main.

High o'er the restless deep, above the reach
Of gunner's hope, vast flights of Wild-ducks stretch;
Far as the eye can glance on either side,
In a broad space and level line they glide;
All in their wedge-like figures from the north,
Day after day, flight after flight, go forth.

In-shore their passage tribes of Sea-gulls urge,
And drop for prey within the sweeping surge;
Oft in the rough opposing blast they fly
Far back, then turn, and all their force apply,
While to the storm they give their weak complaining cry;
Or clap the sleek white pinion to the breast,
And in the restless ocean dip for rest.

Darkness begins to reign; the louder wind
Appals the weak and awes the firmer mind;
But frights not him, whom evening and the spray
In part conceal—yon Prowler on his way:
Lo! he has something seen; he runs apace,
As if he fear'd companion in the chase;
He sees his prize, and now he turns again,
Slowly and sorrowing—"Was your search in vain?"
Gruffly he answers, "'Tis a sorry sight!
A seaman's body: there'll be more to-night!"

Hark to those sounds! they're from distress at sea:
How quick they came! What terrors may there be!
Yes 'tis a driven vessel: I discern
Lights, signs of terror, gleaming from the stern;
Others behold them too, and from the town

In various parties seamen hurry down;
Their wives pursue, and damsels urged by dread,
Lest men so dear be into danger led;
Their head the gown has hooded, and their call
In this sad night is piercing like the squall;
They feel their kinds of power, and when they meet
Chide, fondle, weep, dare, threaten, or intreat.
See one poor girl, all terror and alarm,
Has fondly seized upon her lover's arm;
"Thou shalt not venture;" and he answers "No!
I will not"—Still she cries, "Thou shalt not go."

No need of this; not here the stoutest boat,
Can through such breakers, o'er such billows float,
Yet may they view these lights upon the beach,
Which yield them hope, whom help can never reach.
From parted clouds the moon her radiance throws
On the wild waves, and all the danger shows;
But shows them beaming in her shining vest,
Terrific splendour; gloom in glory dress'd!
This for a moment, and then clouds again
Hide every beam, and fear and darkness reign.
But hear we now those sounds? Do lights appear?
I see them not! the storm alone I hear:
And lo! the sailors homeward take their way;
Man must endure—let us submit and pray.

II.

THE CONVICT'S DREAM.

1812.

FROM "THE BOROUGH," LETTER XXIII.

(1834 *Edition.*)

FAREWELL to these; but other scenes I view,
And other griefs, and guilt of deeper hue;

Where Conscience gives to outward ills her pain,
Gloom to the night, and pressure to the chain:
Here separate cells awhile in misery keep
Two doom'd to suffer; there they strive for sleep;
By day indulged, in larger space they range,
Their bondage certain, but their bounds have change.

One was a female, who had grievous ill
Wrought in revenge, and she enjoy'd it still:
With death before her, and her fate in view,
Unsated vengeance in her bosom grew:
Sullen she was and threat'ning; in her eye
Glared the stern triumph that she dared to die:
But first a being in the world must leave—
'Twas once reproach; 'twas now a short reprieve.

She was a pauper bound, who early gave
Her mind to vice and doubly was a slave:
Upbraided, beaten, held by rough control,
Revenge sustain'd, inspired, and fill'd her soul:
She fired a full-stored barn, confess'd the fact,
And laugh'd at law and justified the act:
Our gentle Vicar tried his powers in vain,
She answer'd not, or answer'd with disdain;
Th' approaching fate she heard without a sigh,
And neither cared to live nor fear'd to die.

Not so he felt, who with her was to pay
The forfeit, life—with dread he view'd the day,
And that short space which yet for him remain'd,
Till with his limbs his faculties were chain'd:
He paced his narrow bounds some ease to find,
But found it not,—no comfort reach'd his mind:
Each sense was palsied; when he tasted food,
He sigh'd and said, "Enough—'tis very good."

Since his dread sentence, nothing seem'd to be
As once it was—he seeing could not see,
Nor hearing, hear aright;—when first I came
Within his view, I fancied there was shame,
I judged resentment; I mistook the air,—
These fainter passions live not with despair;
Or but exist and die:—Hope, fear, and love,
Joy, doubt, and hate, may other spirits move,
But touch not his, who every waking hour
Has one fix'd dread, and always feels its power.

"But will not Mercy?"—No! she cannot plead
For such an outrage;—'twas a cruel deed:
He stopp'd a timid traveller;—to his breast,
With oaths and curses, was the dagger press'd:—
No! he must suffer; pity we may find
For one man's pangs, but must not wrong mankind.

Still I behold him, every thought employ'd
On one dire view!—all others are destroy'd;
This makes his features ghastly, gives the tone
Of his few words resemblance to a groan;
He takes his tasteless food, and when 'tis done,
Counts up his meals, now lessen'd by that one;
For expectation is on time intent,
Whether he brings us joy or punishment.

Yes! e'en in sleep the impressions all remain,
He hears the sentence and he feels the chain;
He sees the judge and jury, when he shakes,
And loudly cries, "Not guilty," and awakes:
Then chilling tremblings o'er his body creep,
Till worn-out nature is compell'd to sleep.

Now comes the dream again: it shows each scene,
With each small circumstance that comes between—

The call to suffering and the very deed—
There crowds go with him, follow, and precede;
Some heartless shout, some pity, all condemn,
While he in fancied envy looks at them:
He seems the place for that sad act to see,
And dreams the very thirst which then will be:
A priest attends—it seems, the one he knew
In his best days, beneath whose care he grew.

At this his terrors take a sudden flight,
He sees his native village with delight;
The house, the chamber, where he once array'd
His youthful person; where he knelt and pray'd;
Then too the comforts he enjoy'd at home,
The days of joy; the joys themselves are come;—
The hours of innocence;—the timid look
Of his loved maid, when first her hand he took,
And told his hope; her trembling joy appears,
Her forced reserve and his retreating fears.

All now is present;—'tis a moment's gleam
Of former sunshine—stay, delightful dream!
Let him within his pleasant garden walk,
Give him her arm, of blessings let them talk.

Yes! all are with him now, and all the while
Life's early prospects and his Fanny's smile:
Then come his sister and his village-friend,
And he will now the sweetest moments spend
Life has to yield;—No! never will he find
Again on earth such pleasure in his mind:
He goes through shrubby walks these friends among,
Love in their looks and honour on the tongue:
Nay, there's a charm beyond what nature shows,
The bloom is softer and more sweetly glows;—

Pierced by no crime, and urged by no desire
For more than true and honest hearts require,
They feel the calm delight, and thus proceed
Through the green lane,—then linger in the mead,—
Stray o'er the heath in all its purple bloom,—
And pluck the blossom where the wild bees hum;
Then through the broomy bound with ease they pass,
And press the sandy sheep-walk's slender grass,
Where dwarfish flowers among the gorse are spread,
And the lamb browses by the linnet's bed;
Then 'cross the bounding brook they make their way
O'er its rough bridge—and there behold the bay!—
The ocean smiling to the fervid sun—
The waves that faintly fall and slowly run—
The ships at distance and the boats at hand;
And now they walk upon the sea-side sand,
Counting the number and what kind they be,
Ships softly sinking in the sleepy sea:
Now arm in arm, now parted they behold
The glitt'ring waters on the shingles roll'd:
The timid girls, half dreading their design,
Dip the small foot in the retarded brine,
And search for crimson weeds, which spreading flow,
Or lie like pictures on the sand below:
With all those bright red pebbles, that the sun
Through the small waves so softly shines upon;
And those live lucid jellies which the eye
Delights to trace as they swim glittering by:
Pearl-shells and rubied star-fish they admire,
And will arrange above the parlour-fire,—
Tokens of bliss!—"Oh! horrible! a wave
Roars as it rises—save me, Edward! save!"
She cries:—Alas! the watchman on his way
Calls, and lets in—truth, terror, and the day!

TALES IN VERSE.

1812.

GEORGE CRABBE.

I.

THE FRANK COURTSHIP.

FROM TALE VI.

(1834 *Edition.*)

Jonas Kindred, a quaker, who has allowed his daughter to spend some years with her aunt, in whose company she has mingled with society, now seeks to affiance her to a young member of his own sect.

NOW the grave father took the lass aside,
Demanding sternly, "Wilt thou be a bride?"
She answer'd, calling up an air sedate,
"I have not vow'd against the holy state."
"No folly, Sybil," said the parent; "know
What to their parents virtuous maidens owe;
A worthy, wealthy youth, whom I approve,
Must thou prepare to honour and to love.
Formal to thee his air and dress may seem,
But the good youth is worthy of esteem:
Shouldst thou with rudeness treat him; of disdain
Should he with justice or of slight complain,
Or of one taunting speech give certain proof,
Girl! I reject thee from my sober roof."
"My aunt," said Sybil, "will with pride protect
One whom a father can for this reject;
Nor shall a formal, rigid, soulless boy
My manners alter, or my views destroy!"
Jonas then lifted up his hands on high,
And, utt'ring something 'twixt a groan and sigh,
Left the determined maid, her doubtful mother by.

"Hear me," she said; "incline thy heart, my child,
And fix thy fancy on a man so mild:
Thy father, Sybil, never could be moved
By one who loved him, or by one he loved.
Union like ours is but a bargain made
By slave and tyrant—he will be obey'd;
Then calls the quiet, comfort—but thy Youth
Is mild by nature, and as frank as truth."
"But will he love?" said Sybil; "I am told
That these mild creatures are by nature cold."
"Alas!" the matron answer'd, "much I dread
That dangerous love by which the young are led!
That love is earthy; you the creature prize,
And trust your feelings and believe your eyes:
Can eyes and feelings inward worth descry?
No! my fair daughter, on our choice rely!
Your love, like that display'd upon the stage,
Indulged is folly, and opposed is rage;—
More prudent love our sober couples show,
All that to mortal beings, mortals owe;
All flesh is grass—before you give a heart,
Remember, Sybil, that in death you part;
And should your husband die before your love,
What needless anguish must a widow prove!
No! my fair child, let all such visions cease;
Yield but esteem, and only try for peace."
"I must be loved," said Sybil; "I must see
The man in terrors who aspires to me;
At my forbidding frown his heart must ache,
His tongue must falter, and his frame must shake:
And if I grant him at my feet to kneel,
What trembling, fearful pleasure must he feel!
Nay, such the raptures that my smiles inspire,
That reason's self must for a time retire."

"Alas! for good *Josiah*," said the dame,
"These wicked thoughts would fill his soul with shame;
He kneel and tremble at a thing of dust!
He cannot, child:"—the Child replied, "He must."

They ceased: the matron left her with a frown;
So Jonas met her when the Youth came down:
"Behold," said he, "thy future spouse attends;
Receive him, daughter, as the best of friends;
Observe, respect him—humble be each word,
That welcomes home thy husband and thy lord."
Forwarn'd, thought Sybil, with a bitter smile,
I shall prepare my manner and my style.

Ere yet Josiah enter'd on his task,
The father met him—"Deign to wear a mask
A few dull days, Josiah,—but a few—
It is our duty, and the sex's due;
I wore it once, and every grateful wife
Repays it with obedience through her life:
Have no regard to Sybil's dress, have none
To her pert language, to her flippant tone;
Henceforward thou shalt rule unquestion'd and alone;
And she thy pleasure in thy looks shall seek—
How she shall dress, and whether she may speak."
A sober smile return'd the Youth, and said,
"Can I cause fear, who am myself afraid?"

Sybil, meantime, sat thoughtful in her room,
And often wonder'd—"Will the creature come?
Nothing shall tempt, shall force me to bestow
My hand upon him,—yet I wish to know."
The door unclosed, and she beheld her sire
Lead in the youth, then hasten to retire;
"Daughter, my friend—my daughter, friend," he cried,
And gave a meaning look, and stepp'd aside:

That look contain'd a mingled threat and prayer,
"Do take him, child—offend him, if you dare."

The couple gazed—were silent, and the maid
Look'd in his face, to make the man afraid;
The man, unmoved, upon the maiden cast
A steady view—so salutation pass'd:
But in this instant Sybil's eye had seen
The tall fair person, and the still staid mien;
The glow that temp'rance o'er the cheek had spread,
Where the soft down half veil'd the purest red;
And the serene deportment that proclaim'd
A heart unspotted, and a life unblamed:
But then with these she saw attire too plain,
The pale brown coat, though worn without a stain;
The formal air, and something of the pride
That indicates the wealth it seems to hide;
And looks that were not, she conceived, exempt
From a proud pity, or a sly contempt.
Josiah's eyes had their employment too,
Engaged and soften'd by so bright a view;
A fair and meaning face, an eye of fire,
That check'd the bold, and made the free retire:
But then with these he mark'd the studied dress
And lofty air, that scorn or pride express;
With that insidious look, that seem'd to hide
In an affected smile the scorn and pride;
And if his mind the virgin's meaning caught,
He saw a foe with treacherous purpose fraught—
Captive the heart to take, and to reject it, caught.

Silent they sate—thought Sybil, that he seeks
Something, no doubt; I wonder if he speaks:
Scarcely she wonder'd, when these accents fell
Slow in her ear—"Fair maiden, art thou well?"

"Art thou physician?" she replied; "my hand,
My pulse, at least, shall be at thy command."

She said—and saw, surprised, Josiah kneel,
And gave his lips the offer'd pulse to feel;
The rosy colour rising in her cheek,
Seem'd that surprise unmix'd with wrath to speak;
Then sternness she assumed, and—"Doctor, tell—
Thy words cannot alarm me—am I well?"

"Thou art," said he; "and yet thy dress so light
I do conceive, some danger must excite:"
"In whom?" said Sybil, with a look demure:
"In more," said he, "than I expect to cure;—
I, in thy light luxuriant robe, behold
Want and excess, abounding and yet cold;
Here needed, there display'd, in many a wanton fold:
Both health and beauty, learned authors show,
From a just medium in our clothing flow."

"Proceed, good doctor; if so great my need,
What is thy fee? Good Doctor! pray proceed."

"Large is my fee, fair lady, but I take
None till some progress in my cure I make:
Thou hast disease, fair maiden; thou art vain;
Within that face sit insult and disdain;
Thou art enamour'd of thyself; my art
Can see the naughty malice of thy heart:
With a strong pleasure would thy bosom move,
Were I to own thy power, and ask thy love;
And such thy beauty, damsel, that I might,
But for thy pride, feel danger in thy sight,
And lose my present peace in dreams of vain delight."

"And can thy patients," said the nymph, "endure
Physic like this? and will it work a cure?"

"Such is my hope, fair damsel; thou, I find,
Hast the true tokens of a noble mind;
But the world wins thee, Sybil, and thy joys
Are placed in trifles, fashions, follies, toys;
Thou hast sought pleasure in the world around,
That in thine own pure bosom should be found:
Did all that world admire thee, praise and love,
Could it the least of nature's pains remove?
Could it for errors, follies, sins atone,
Or give thee comfort, thoughtful and alone?
It has, believe me, maid, no power to charm
Thy soul from sorrow, or thy flesh from harm:
Turn then, fair creature, from a world of sin,
And seek the jewel happiness within."

"Speak'st thou at meeting?" said the nymph; "thy speech
Is that of mortal very prone to teach;
But wouldst thou, doctor, from the patient learn
Thine own disease?—The cure is thy concern."

"Yea, with good will."—"Then know 'tis thy complaint,
That, for a sinner, thou'rt too much a saint;
Hast too much show of the sedate and pure,
And without cause art formal and demure:
This makes a man unsocial, unpolite;
Odious when wrong, and insolent if right.
Thou may'st be good, but why should goodness be
Wrapt in a garb of such formality?
Thy person well might please a damsel's eye,
In decent habit with a scarlet dye;
But, jest apart—what virtue canst thou trace
In that broad brim that hides thy sober face?
Does that long-skirted drab, that over-nice
And formal clothing, prove a scorn of vice?

Then for thine accent—what in sound can be
So void of grace as dull monotony?
Love has a thousand varied notes to move
The human heart:—thou may'st not speak of love,
Till thou hast cast thy formal ways aside,
And those becoming youth and nature tried:
Not till exterior freedom, spirit, ease,
Prove it thy study and delight to please;
Not till these follies meet thy just disdain,
While yet thy virtues and thy worth remain."

"This is severe!—Oh! maiden, wilt not thou
Something for habits, manners, modes, allow?"—
"Yes! but allowing much, I much require,
In my behalf, for manners, modes, attire!"

"True, lovely Sybil; and, this point agreed,
Let me to those of greater weight proceed:
Thy father!"—"Nay," she quickly interposed,
"Good doctor, here our conference is closed!"

Then left the Youth, who, lost in his retreat,
Passed the good matron on her garden seat;
His looks were troubled, and his air, once mild
And calm, was hurried:—"My audacious child!"
Exclaim'd the dame, "I read what she has done
In thy displeasure—Ah! the thoughtless one:
But yet, Josiah, to my stern good man
Speak of the maid as mildly as you can:
Can you not seem to woo a little while
The daughter's will, the father to beguile?
So that his wrath in time may wear away;
Will you preserve our peace, Josiah? say."

"Yes! my good neighbour," said the gentle youth,
"Rely securely on my care and truth;

And should thy comfort with my efforts cease ;
And only then,—perpetual is thy peace."

The dame had doubts: she well his virtues knew,
His deeds were friendly, and his words were true ;
"But to address this vixen is a task
He is ashamed to take, and I to ask."
Soon as the father from Josiah learn'd
What pass'd with Sybil, he the truth discern'd.
"He loves," the man exclaimed, "he loves, 'tis plain,
The thoughtless girl, and shall he love in vain ?
She may be stubborn, but she shall be tried,
Born as she is of wilfulness and pride."

With anger fraught, but willing to persuade,
The wrathful father met the smiling maid :
"Sybil," said he, "I long, and yet I dread
To know thy conduct—hath Josiah fled ?
And, grieved and fretted by the scornful air,
For his lost peace, betaken him to prayer ?
Could'st thou his pure and modest mind distress,
By vile remarks upon his speech, address,
Attire, and voice ?"—"All this I must confess."—
"Unhappy child ! what labour will it cost
To win him back !"—"I do not think him lost."—
"Courts he then, (trifler !) insult and disdain ?"—
"No : but from these he courts me to refrain."—
"Then hear me, Sybil—should Josiah leave
Thy father's house ?"—"My father's child would grieve !"
"That is of grace, and if he come again
To speak of love ?"—"I might from grief refrain."—
"Then wilt thou, daughter, our design embrace ?"—
"Can I resist it, if it be of grace ?"—
"Dear child ! in three plain words thy mind express—
Wilt thou have this good youth ?"—"Dear father ! yes.'

II.

THE DEATH OF LUCY.

FROM "THE MOTHER," TALE VIII.

(1834 *Edition.*)

The mother, a vain and selfish woman, has just lost her eldest daughter, for whom she had planned a high matrimonial alliance, by death, and, notwithstanding Lucy's betrothal to another, seeks to force her to renounce her lover and accept her sister's suitor.

LUCY, meantime, though threaten'd and distress'd,
Against her marriage made a strong protest:
All was domestic war; the Aunt rebell'd
Against the sovereign will, and was expell'd;
And every power was tried, and every art,
To bend to falsehood one determined heart;
Assail'd, in patience it received the shock,
Soft as the wave, unshaken as the rock:
But while th' unconquer'd soul endures the storm
Of angry fate, it preys upon the form;
With conscious virtue she resisted still,
And conscious love gave vigour to her will:
But Lucy's trial was at hand; with joy
The Mother cried—"Behold your constant boy—
Thursday—was married:—take the paper, sweet,
And read the conduct of your reverend cheat;
See with what pomp of coaches, in what crowd
The creature married—of his falsehood proud!
False, did I say?—at least no whining fool;
And thus will hopeless passions ever cool:
But shall his bride your single state reproach?
No! give him crowd for crowd, and coach for coach.
Oh! you retire; reflect then, gentle miss,
And gain some spirit in a cause like this."

Some spirit Lucy gain'd ; a steady soul,
Defying all persuasion, all control :
In vain reproach, derision, threats were tried ;
The constant mind all outward force defied,
By vengeance vainly urged, in vain assail'd by pride;
Fix'd in her purpose, perfect in her part,
She felt the courage of a wounded heart ;
The world receded from her rising view,
When heaven approach'd as earthly things withdrew;...

Surprised, the mother saw the languid frame,
And felt indignant, yet forbore to blame :
Once with a frown she cried, "And do you mean
To die of love—the folly of fifteen ?"
But as her anger met with no reply,
She let the gentle girl in quiet die ;
And to her sister wrote, impell'd by pain,
"Come quickly, Martha, or you come in vain."
Lucy meantime profess'd with joy sincere,
That nothing held, employ'd, engaged her here.

"I am an humble actor, doom'd to play
A part obscure, and then to glide away :
Incurious how the great or happy shine,
Or who have parts obscure and sad as mine ;
In its best prospect I but wish'd, for life,
To be th' assiduous, gentle, useful wife ;
That lost, with wearied mind, and spirit poor,
I drop my efforts, and can act no more ;
With growing joy I feel my spirits tend
To that last scene where all my duties end."

Hope, ease, delight, the thoughts of dying gave,
Till Lucy spoke with fondness of the grave ;
She smiled with wasted form, but spirit firm,
And said, "She left but little for the worm :"

As toll'd the bell "There's one," she said, hath press'd
"Awhile before me to the bed of rest:"
And she beside her with attention spread
The decorations of the maiden dead.

While quickly thus the mortal part declin'd,
The happiest visions fill'd the active mind;
A soft, religious melancholy gain'd
Entire possession, and for ever reign'd:
On Holy Writ her mind reposing dwelt,
She saw the wonders, she the mercies felt;
Till in a blest and glorious reverie,
She seem'd the Saviour as on earth to see,
And filled with love divine, th' attending friend to be;
Or she who trembling, yet confiding, stole
Near to the garment, touch'd it, and was whole;
When, such th' intenseness of the working thought,
On her it seem'd the very deed was wrought;
She the glad patient's fear and rapture found,
The holy transport, and the healing wound;
This was so fix'd, so grafted in the heart,
That she adopted, nay, became the part:
But one chief scene was present to her sight,
Her Saviour resting in the tomb by night;
Her fever rose, and still her wedded mind
Was to that scene, that hallow'd cave, confin'd—
Where in the shade of death the body laid,
There watch'd the spirit of the wandering maid;
Her looks were fix'd, entranced, illumed, serene,
In the still glory of the midnight scene:
There at her Saviour's feet in visions blest,
Th' enraptured maid a sacred joy possess'd;
In patience waiting for the first-born ray
Of that all-glorious and triumphant day:

To this idea all her soul she gave,
Her mind reposing by the sacred grave;
Then sleep would seal the eye, the vision close,
And steep the solemn thoughts in brief repose.

Then grew the soul serene, and all its powers
Again restored, illumed the dying hours;
But reason dwelt where fancy stray'd before,
And the mind wander'd from its views no more:
Till death approach'd, when every look express'd
A sense of bliss, till every sense had rest.

The Mother lives, and has enough to buy
The attentive ear and the submissive eye
Of abject natures,—these are daily told,
How triumph'd beauty in the days of old;
How, by her window seated, crowds have cast
Admiring glances, wondering as they pass'd;
How from her carriage as she stepp'd to pray,
Divided ranks would humbly make her way;
And how each voice in the astonish'd throng
Pronounced her peerless as she moved along.

Her picture then the greedy Dame displays;
Touch'd by no shame, she now demands its praise;
In her tall mirror then she shows a face,
Still coldly fair with unaffecting grace;
These she compares: "It has the form," she cries,
"But wants the air, the spirit, and the eyes;
This, as a likeness, is correct and true,
But there alone the living grace we view."
This said, th' applauding voice the Dame required,
And, gazing, slowly from the glass retired.

TALES OF THE HALL.

1819.

GEORGE CRABBE.

AN ENTANGLEMENT.

FROM "DELAY HAS DANGER," BOOK XIII.

(1834 *Edition.*)

A gentleman who is engaged to be married to a lady of his own station in life, is, while on a visit to "The Hall," foolish enough to indulge in a meaningless flirtation with the adopted daughter of his host's steward, who, with his wife, having succeeded in effecting the entanglement, now offer their victim their kindly encouragement.

WITHIN the park, beside the bounding brook,
The social pair their usual ramble took;
And there the steward found them: they could trace
News in his look and gladness in his face. . . .

The trembling Fanny, as he came in view,
Within the chestnut grove in fear withdrew;
While Henry wonder'd, not without a fear,
Of that which brought th' important man so near:
Doubt was dispersed by—"My esteem'd young man!"
As he with condescending grace began—
"Though you with youthful frankness nobly trust
Your Fanny's friends, and doubtless think them just;
Though you have not, with craving soul, applied
To us, and asked the fortune of your bride,
Be it our care that you shall not lament
That love has made you so improvident.

An orphan maid—Your patience! you shall have
Your time to speak; I now attention crave,—
Fanny, dear girl, has in my spouse and me
Friends of a kind we wish our friends to be,
None of the poorest—nay, sir, no reply,
You shall not need—and we are born to die; . . .

"Sir," said the Youth, his terrors all awake,
"Hear me, I pray, I beg,—for mercy's sake!
Sir, were the secrets of my soul confess'd,
Would you admit the truths that I protest
Are such—your pardon ——"
"Pardon! good, my friend,
I not alone will pardon, I commend:
Think you that I have no remembrance left
Of youthful love, and Cupid's cunning theft?
How nymphs will listen when their swains persuade,
How hearts are gain'd and how exchange is made?
Come, sir, your hand——"
"In mercy, hear me now!"
"I cannot hear you, time will not allow:
You know my station, what on me depends,
For ever needed—but we part as friends;
And here comes one who will the whole explain,
My better self—and we shall meet again."
"Sir, I entreat——"
"Then be entreaty made
To her, a woman, one you may persuade;
A little teasing, but she will comply,
And loves her niece too fondly to deny."

"Oh! he is mad, and miserable I!"
Exclaimed the Youth; "but let me now collect
My scatter'd thoughts, I something must effect."

Hurrying she came—"Now what has he confess'd
Ere I could come to set your heart at rest?
What! he has grieved you! Yet he, too, approves
The thing! but man will tease you, if he loves.
But now for business: tell me, did you think
That we should always at your meetings wink?
Think you, you walk'd unseen? There are who bring

To me all secrets—O, you wicked thing!
Poor Fanny! now I think I see her blush,
All red and rosy, when I beat the bush;
And 'hide your secret,' said I, 'if you dare!'
So out it came, like an affrighten'd hare.

'Miss!' said I gravely; and the trembling maid
Pleased me at heart to see her so afraid;
And then she wept;—now, do remember this,
Never to chide her when she does amiss;
For she is tender as the callow bird,
And cannot bear to have her temper stirred;—
'Fanny,' I said, then whispered her the name,
And caused such looks—Yes, yours are just the same;
But hear my story.—When your love was known
For this our child,—she is, in fact, our own—
Then, first debating, we agreed at last
To seek my Lord, and tell him what had passed."

"To tell the Earl?"

"Yes, truly, and why not?
And then together we contrived our plot."

"Eternal God!"

"Nay, be not so surprised,—
In all the matter we were well advised;
We saw my Lord, and Lady Jane was there,
And said to Johnson,—'Johnson, take a chair;'
True, we are servants in a certain way,
But in the higher places so are they;
We are obey'd in ours, and they in theirs obey—
So Johnson bow'd, for that was right and fit,
And had no scruple with the Earl to sit—
Why look you so impatient while I tell
What they debated? You must like it well. . . .
"O! we have watch'd you on from day to day,

'There go the lovers!' we were wont to say—
But why that look?"—
"Dear madam, I implore
A single moment!"—
"I can give no more:
'Here are your letters—that's a female pen,'
Said I to Fanny—'Tis his sister's, then,'
Replied the maid—No! never must you stray;
Or hide your wanderings, if you should, I pray;
I know, at least I fear, the best may err,
But keep the by-walks of your life from her: . . .

Now, mind that none with her divide your heart,
For she would die ere lose the smallest part;
And I rejoice that all has gone so well,
For who th' effect of Johnson's rage can tell?
He had his fears when you began to meet,
But I assured him there was no deceit:
He is a man who kindness will requite,
But injured once, revenge is his delight;
And he would spend the best of his estates
To ruin, goods and body, them he hates;
While he is kind enough when he approves
A deed that's done, and serves the man he loves:
Come, read your letters—I must now be gone,
And think of matters that are coming on."

Henry was lost,—his brain confused, his soul
Dismay'd and sunk, his thoughts beyond control;
Borne on by terror, he foreboding read
Cecilia's letter! and his courage fled;
All was a gloomy, dark, and dreadful view,
He felt him guilty, but indignant too:—
And as he read, he felt the high disdain
Of injured men—"She may repent in vain."

Cecilia much had heard, and told him all
That scandal taught—"a servant at the Hall . . .
Not virtuous though unfeeling, cold as ice
And yet not chaste, the weeping fool of vice;
Yielding, not tender; feeble, not refined;
Her form insipid, and without a mind."

Rival! she spurn'd the word; but let him stay,
Warn'd as he was! beyond the present day,
Whate'er his patron might object to this,
The uncle-butler, or the weeping miss,—
Let him from this one single day remain,
And then return! he would to her, in vain;
There let him then abide, to earn, or crave
Food undeserved! and be with slaves a slave.

Had reason guided anger, govern'd zeal,
Or chosen words to make a lover feel,
She might have saved him—anger and abuse
Will but defiance and revenge produce.

"Unjust and cruel, insolent and proud!"
He said, indignant, and he spoke aloud.
"Butler! and servant! Gentlest of thy sex,
Thou wouldst not thus a man who loved thee vex;
Thou wouldst not thus to vile report give ear,
Nor thus enraged for fancied crimes appear;
I know not what, dear maid!—if thy soft smiles were here."
And then, that instant, there appear'd the maid,
By his sad looks in her approach dismay'd;
Such timid sweetness, and so wrong'd, did more
Than all her pleading tenderness before.

In that weak moment, when disdain and pride,
And fear and fondness, drew the man aside,
In this weak moment—"Wilt thou," he began,
"Be mine?" and joy o'er all her features ran;

"I will!" she softly whisper'd; but the roar
Of cannon would not strike his spirit more;
Ev'n as his lips the lawless contract seal'd
He felt that conscience lost her sevenfold shield,
And honour fled; but still he spoke of love,
And all was joy in the consenting dove.

That evening all in fond discourse was spent,
When the sad lover to his chamber went,
To think on what had passed, to grieve and to repent:
Early he rose, and look'd, with many a sigh,
On the red light that fill'd the eastern sky;
Oft had he stood before, alert and gay,
To hail the glories of the new-born day:
But now dejected, languid, listless, low,
He saw the wind upon the water blow,
And the cold stream curl'd onward as the gale
From the pine-hill blew harshly down the dale;
On the right side the youth a wood survey'd,
With all its dark intensity of shade;
Where the rough wind alone was heard to move,
In this, the pause of nature and of love,
When now the young are rear'd, and when the old,
Lost to the tie, grow negligent and cold—
Far to the left he saw the huts of men,
Half hid in mist, that hung upon the fen,
Before him, swallows, gathering for the sea,
Took their short flights, and twitter'd on the lea;
And near the bean-sheaf stood, the harvest done,
And slowly blacken'd in the sickly sun;
All these were sad in nature, or they took
Sadness from him, the likeness of his look,
And of his mind—he ponder'd for a while,
Then met his Fanny with a borrow'd smile.

William Blake.

1757—1827.

William Blake, one of the most remarkable men of modern times, was born at No. 28, Broad Street, Carnaby Market, near Golden Square, London, on the 20th or 28th of November, 1757. His father was a hosier by trade, and William the second child of a family of five.

The young poet's education was of the most limited character, reading and writing apparently forming the whole of his curriculum. At the age of ten he became a pupil of Mr. Pars, and attended his drawing school in the Strand; and at the age of eleven, or "in his twelfth year," to quote the prefatory words of his "Poetical Sketches," some of the poems of that collection were written. Thus early, if not indeed earlier, he had shown his predilection and ability for both the arts in which he afterwards accomplished so much. He was fond of haunting old sale rooms, where he purchased at low prices prints after Raphael, Michael Angelo, Albert Durer, and other old masters, which he copied and presented to his mother; fond, too, of wandering off into the country lanes, not then so far removed from Golden Square as now, to enjoy nature and compose verse. The lyric which commences,—

"How sweet I roam'd from field to field,"

is said to have been written before he was fourteen years old, and shows how early he demonstrated high poetic power.

On attaining fourteen years of age, the young poet was apprenticed to James Basire, an engraver, of 31, Great Queen Street, Lincoln's Inn Fields, a gentleman who at that time was engaged on the work of the Antiquarian and the Royal societies, and whose bold drawing and correct style is traceable in his pupil's method. Here Blake doubtless saw some of the most notable men of the time, and it is recorded that on one occasion he was much impressed by the appearance of Oliver Goldsmith in his master's shop, and that he expressed the desire to have as fine a head as that of the laureate of "Auburn" when he became a man. After two years' instruction in the elements and technicalities of the engraver's art, the young poet-artist was sent by his master to make drawings of the buildings and monuments of Westminster Abbey, and of other old churches of the Metropolis, an occupation which must have been eminently congenial to the spirit of the youthful visionary. It does honour to the young apprentice that it is recorded of him that his chief pleasure at this time was to make drawings and write verses and to hang them in his mother's room. Never was there a purer source of inspiration, never a holier object of ambition.

On the completion of his apprenticeship, Blake became a student at the Royal Academy, then but an infant institution, and gradually extending his knowledge of art and artists, became acquainted with Flaxman, Stothard, and later on of Fuseli the Swiss artist. In the year 1780 Blake exhibited for

the first time at the Academy, a picture probably in water colours, of the death of the Earl of Godwin. He continued to exhibit occasionally at long intervals until 1808, when he contributed two pictures to the exhibition, one of "Christ in the Sepulchre guarded by Angels," and one of "Jacob's Dream."

In 1782 Blake married Catherine Sophia Boucher, the daughter of a market-gardener at Battersea, a lady who though "slim," "graceful," and "very pretty," was unable to do more than make her mark on the marriage register. The marriage, however, was one of the happiest on record, for the poet-artist found in his wife a true helpmeet, a veritable "angel in the house." He taught her to read and write, and trained her in the printing of his engravings and their subsequent colouring, instructing her also in designing until she became so accomplished in the art that her work is said to be sometimes indistinguishable from his. After the marriage the young couple went to reside at 23, Green Street, Leicester Fields, and Blake, introduced by Flaxman to Mrs. Mathew, the wife of Rev. Henry Mathew, became a frequent visitor at the conversaziones of literature and fashion that took place under her auspices at her house 27, Rathbone Place. At these gatherings Blake's poems, read by himself, were listened to with much interest, as were also some which he had set to melodies of his own, the singing of which by himself is described as having been "most singularly beautiful." This introduction proved practically useful to Blake, for it was the Rev. Henry Mathew, in conjunction with Flaxman, who was instrumental in causing the printing of Blake's first work the now famous "Poetical Sketches," which

appeared in 1783, and for which he also wrote a few words by way of preface.

The "Poetical Sketches" are truly remarkable productions. The age at which they were written—between the years of ten and twenty; the period of their production—anterior to the appearance of the earliest publications of Cowper, Burns, and the other pioneers of the spirit of modern poetry; the circumstances of the poet himself and the conditions under which he wrote; all combine to excite wonder and astonishment. Equally independent of the traditions of his predecessors and the fashions of his contemporaries, he went to nature for his inspirations, and drinking deeply of the same well-spring that refreshed the Elizabethan poets, produced lyrics with all the old charm and grace, lyrics which in their child-like simplicity have never been excelled, lyrics which anticipated the Lake poets by many years. Speaking of the sister art, Blake once said: "I cannot say that Raphael ever was, from my earliest childhood, hidden from me. I saw and I knew immediately the difference between Raphael and Rubens;" and it would seem that the same spiritual intuition which enabled him, without education, or in spite of it, to discern the better models of art, enabled him also to brush aside contemporary influences and modern examples for the purer models of poetry which lay beyond. Both in lyrical gift and literary finish the "Poetical Sketches" remain unsurpassed by the poet's later works, though the best pieces of his subsequent volumes are doubtless equal to the best of his earlier efforts.

In 1784 Blake's father died, and was succeeded in his hosiery business at 28, Broad Street, by his third

son James; William shortly afterwards taking the next house, No. 27, in conjunction with one of his fellow-apprentices named Parker, and opening it as a printseller's and engraver's, under the title Parker & Blake; Mrs. Blake acting as saleswoman. About this time the poet's brother Robert, five years his junior, became his pupil in engraving, and, but for the intervention of the hand of death, might have fulfilled unusual promise. It was in the early part of 1787 that Robert died, and William declared that he saw his brother's soul ascend through the ceiling "clapping its hands for joy!" This same year the partnership of Parker & Blake was dissolved, and the poet-artist and his wife went to reside at No. 28, Poland Street.

Blake had from his earliest years been subject to visions of the spiritual. At four years of age he was said to have seen God looking at him through the window; and at ten, in the neighbourhood of Peckham Rye, a tree filled with angels, their wings shining with starlike brilliancy amongst the boughs. At another time he said he saw angels moving about among a company of haymakers; and later, a vision which inspired him for the execution of a grand figure of "The Ancient of Days." As Blake got older these spiritual manifestations became more frequent to him, until he seemed to live in a world of his own, for ever holding converse with the spirits of the mighty dead. To the visionary poet the spiritual was ever more real than the material, and regarding the body as little better than a garment which obscures that which it covers, he claimed to have truer communion with the disembodied spirits of the departed than with

those which could only half reveal themselves to him through his physical senses. In a very real sense he was "in the world but not of the world," living in the most earthly of earthly cities, and yet being, as his wife said, "always away in paradise." Moses and the prophets he affirmed were his frequent visitors; Homer, Dante, and Milton his constant companions. He described them as "all majestic shadows grey, but luminous, and superior to the ordinary height of men." Later in life, at the instance of John Varley, the water-colour artist (who was introduced to him by John Linnell, the landscape painter), Blake drew pictures of the more frequent of his spiritual visitors, looking up from his work from time to time, and gazing into space as another artist would at a material model, and describing the expressions of approval or disapproval with which the spirits regarded his work. Numbers of these examples passed into the hands of Linnell, and have been preserved.

Although it is not within the scope of this work to deal with the "Prophetic Books," which grew out of these inspirations, this much reference to the visionary character of the poet is necessary as an explanation of the manner in which he was led to adopt the method of producing his subsequent work. Blake was at this time in very reduced circumstances; the partnership had been dissolved, the print shop had been given up, and he lacked the means to meet even the limited expenses necessary for the issue of so slight a book as the "Songs of Innocence," now ready for publication. Under these circumstances, he affirmed, the spirit of his brother Robert appeared to him, and revealed to him an

entirely novel and economic method which enabled the poet-artist, with the assistance of his wife, to produce the books entirely by their own hands, save only the making of the paper. This plan was simply to write the text and draw the designs on plates of copper, with an impervious ink, and to destroy the remaining surface of the plate by a strong acid, thus leaving the text and design in relief like that of a stereotyped plate. From this he printed in the ordinary way, colouring the proofs by hand. In this way the "Songs of Innocence" found their way into print in 1789, and in this way all Blake's literary works were produced with the single exception of the first part of a poem on the French Revolution which was printed in the ordinary manner. "The Songs of Innocence," twenty in number, contain some of Blake's sweetest writing. In 1793 the poet removed to No. 13, Hercules Buildings, Lambeth. In 1800 he went to live at Felpham, Sussex, to be near William Hayley, the illustrations for whose life of Cowper he had undertaken to engrave. He returned to London, and took up his abode at 17, South Moulton Street, in 1804.

With the exception of the "Songs of Experience," published 1794, which have been aptly called "Sad Antiphons of the Songs of Innocence," and a few short poems written at different times, undated, and which are generally classed as later poems, the remainder of Blake's literary works are of so mystical a character as to baffle the critic and bewilder the student. These include "The Book of Thiel" 1789, "The Marriage of Heaven and Hell" 1790, "Visions of the Daughters of Albion" 1793, a series of prophetic books entitled "America" 1793, "Europe"

1794, "The Book of Urizen" (Part I.) 1794, "Asia and Africa" issued under the general title "The Song of Los" (Time) 1795, "The Book of Ahamia" 1795, "Jerusalem" 1804, and "Milton" 1804. Of these works, so absolutely unintelligible to the ordinary reader, Blake himself had the profoundest admiration. In his preface to "Jerusalem," written at Felpham, between 1800 and 1803, he speaks of it as "dictated" to him, and on another occasion he refers to it as "the grandest poem that this world contains," adding, "I may praise it since I dare not pretend to be any other than the secretary—the authors are in eternity." At another time he wrote, "I have written this poem from immediate dictation, twelve, or sometimes twenty or thirty lines at a time, without premeditation and even against my will." These were the last of the prophetic books which were published, if we except "The Ghost of Abel," published in 1822, though by no means the last that Blake wrote. It is said that he produced a larger mass of writings than the works of Shakespeare and Milton combined, but without being able to find publishers for them.

The remaining years of Blake's life were devoted to the production of designs and engravings illustrative of the writings of others. Of these he had already produced five hundred and thirty-seven designs to illustrate Young's "Night Thoughts," of which, however, only some forty-three were published, and these in 1797. These were followed in 1804–5 by twelve designs in illustration of Blair's poem "The Grave"; in 1809–10 by his "Canterbury Pilgrims," and in 1826 by his "Inventions to the Book of Job"—the finest monument of his genius,

issued at £10 10s. John Linnell, by whose generous assistance this work was published, now drew Blake's attention to Dante's "Divine Commedia," as a subject for illustration, and Blake, though so far advanced in years, turned his attention to the study of the Italian language, learning sufficient to enable him to produce nearly one hundred water-colour designs to illustrate that great poem, seven of which he engraved. This work Blake did not live to finish, though he was wont to be propped up in bed to go on with the designs. The last recorded work of his pencil was a picture of his wife. He had been executing a coloured reproduction of a favourite design, "The Ancient of Days," from the prophecy of "Europe," for which he had received a commission, when he said to his wife, who was standing by his side, "Stay! keep as you are; you have ever been an angel to me; I will draw you!" The result is described as "a frenzied sketch of some power, highly interesting, but not like." The great artist died at No. 3, Fountain Court, Strand, whither he had removed in 1820-1, on the 12th August, 1827, on which day it is recorded that "he composed and uttered songs to his Maker;" saying to his wife as she stood near him, "My beloved, they are not mine; no, they are not mine!" He told her they would not be separated, but that he should always be about her to take care of her, that he was going to a country which he had all his life wished to see, and that he was happy, hoping for salvation through Jesus Christ. Just before his death, it is said, "his countenance became fair, his eyes brightened, and he burst out into singing of the things he saw in heaven," after which his great spirit broke the fetters

which had only half-bound him to the material, and passed into the freedom of the spiritual so quietly that the precise moment of his emancipation could not be determined. For the story of Blake's life and for many specimens of his later verse, the public are indebted to Mr. Alexander Gilchrist, whose splendid "Life of Blake," in two volumes, published by Messrs. Macmillan & Co., is the main source of information and repository of examples. A more interesting work on a more interesting subject it would be difficult to name.

Blake's poetry is unique in English literature, and it is of a kind that either requires no explanation or baffles all. He was a man of extremes, producing, on the one hand, perhaps the simplest writing in our language, and, on the other, certainly the most obscure. Into the question of his sanity there is no need to enter here; there is no madness in the works upon which his poetic fame will rest. The three volumes, "The Poetical Sketches," "The Songs of Innocence," and "The Songs of Experience," contain the poems for which his memory will be cherished and honoured. At his best he is simple to transparency, refined to delicacy, choice to chastity, as melodious as the nightingale, as bright as the wayside flower, and as fresh as the morning dew. The student who comes upon his work while wandering amid the arid wastes of his time, is like the traveller who finds a green retreat in desert-places, where beside still waters, and beneath the shadow of the grateful palm, the camels halt, the flocks are watered, and the weary rest.

ALFRED H. MILES.

POETICAL SKETCHES.

1783.

WILLIAM BLAKE.

I. SONG.

HOW sweet I roam'd from field to field,
And tasted all the summer's pride,
Till I the Prince of Love beheld,
Who in the sunny beams did glide!

He show'd me lilies for my hair,
And blushing roses for my brow;
He led me through his gardens fair
Where all his golden pleasures grow.

With sweet May-dews my wings were wet,
And Phœbus fired my vocal rage;
He caught me in his silken net,
And shut me in his golden cage.

He loves to sit and hear me sing,
Then, laughing, sports and plays with me;
Then stretches out my golden wing,
And mocks my loss of liberty.

II. SONG.

MY silks and fine array,
My smiles and languish'd air,
By love are driven away;
And mournful lean Despair
Brings me yew to deck my grave:
Such end true lovers have.

His face is fair as heav'n
  When springing buds unfold;
O why to him was't given,
  Whose heart is wintry cold?
His breast is love's all-worship'd tomb,
Where all love's pilgrims come.

Bring me an axe and spade,
  Bring me a winding-sheet;
When I my grave have made,
  Let winds and tempests beat:
Then down I'll lie, as cold as clay.
True love doth pass away!

III. SONG.

MEMORY, hither come,
  And tune your merry notes;
And, while upon the wind,
  Your music floats,
I'll pore upon the stream,
Where sighing lovers dream,
And fish for fancies as they pass
Within the watery glass.

I'll drink of the clear stream,
  And hear the linnet's song;
And there I'll lie and dream
  The day along:
And, when night comes, I'll go
To places fit for woe;
Walking along the darken'd valley,
With silent Melancholy.

IV. MAD SONG

THE wild winds weep,
And the night is a-cold;
Come hither, Sleep,
And my griefs enfold:
But lo! the morning peeps
Over the eastern steeps,
And the rustling birds of dawn
The earth do scorn.

Lo! to the vault
Of pavèd heaven,
With sorrow fraught
My notes are driven:
They strike the ear of night,
Make weep the eyes of day;
They make mad the roaring winds,
And with tempests play.

Like a fiend in a cloud
With howling woe,
After night I do crowd,
And with night will go;
I turn my back to the east,
From whence comforts have increas'd;
For light doth seize my brain
With frantic pain.

V. SONG.

FRESH from the dewy hill, the merry year
Smiles on my head, and mounts his flaming car;
Round my young brows the laurel wreathes a shade,
And rising glories beam around my head.

My feet are wing'd, while o'er the dewy lawn
I meet my maiden, risen like the morn :
Oh bless those holy feet, like angels' feet ;
Oh bless those limbs, beaming with heav'nly light !

Like as an angel glitt'ring in the sky,
In times of innocence and holy joy ;
The joyful shepherd stops his grateful song,
To hear the music of an angel's tongue.

So when she speaks, the voice of Heaven I hear ;
So when we walk, nothing impure comes near ;
Each field seems Eden, and each calm retreat ;
Each village seems the haunt of holy feet.

But that sweet village where my black-ey'd maid
Closes her eyes in sleep beneath night's shade,
Whene'er I enter, more than mortal fire
Burns in my soul, and does my song inspire.

VI. TO THE MUSES.

WHETHER on Ida's shady brow,
Or in the chambers of the East,
The chambers of the Sun, that now
From ancient melody have ceas'd ;

Whether in Heav'n ye wander fair,
Or the green corners of the earth,
Or the blue regions of the air,
Where the melodious winds have birth ;

Whether on crystal rocks ye rove,
Beneath the bosom of the sea,
Wandering in many a coral grove,
Fair Nine, forsaking Poetry;

How have you left the ancient love
That bards of old enjoyed in you!
The languid strings do scarcely move,
The sound is forc'd, the notes are few!

VII. BLIND-MAN'S BUFF.

WHEN silver snow decks Susan's clothes,
And jewel hangs at th' shepherd's nose,
The blushing bank is all my care,
With hearth so red, and walls so fair;
"Heap the sea-coal,—come, heap it higher,
The oaken log lay on the fire;"
The well-wash'd stools, a circling row,
With lad and lass, how fair the show!
The merry can of nut-brown ale,
The laughing jest, the love-sick tale,
'Till, tir'd of chat, the game begins,
The lasses prick the lads with pins;
Roger from Dolly twitch'd the stool;
She falling, kiss'd the ground, poor fool!
She blush'd so red, with sidelong glance
At hob-nail Dick, who griev'd the chance.
But now for Blind-man's Buff they call;
Of each incumbrance clear the hall—
Jenny her silken 'kerchief folds,
And blear-ey'd Will the black lot holds;

Now laughing, stops, with "Silence! hush!"
And Peggy Pout gives Sam a push.—
The Blind-man's arms, extended wide,
Sam slips between;—"O, woe betide
Thee, clumsy Will!"—but titt'ring Kate
Is penn'd up in the corner strait!
And now Will's eyes beheld the play,
He thought his face was t'other way.—
"Now, Kitty, now; what chance hast thou,
Roger so near thee trips; I vow!"
She catches him—then Roger ties
His own head up—but not his eyes;
For through the slender cloth he sees,
And runs at Sam, who slips with ease
His clumsy hold; and, dodging round,
Sukey is tumbled on the ground!—
"See what it is to play unfair!
Where cheating is, there's mischief there."
But Roger still pursues the chase,—
"He sees! he sees!" cries softly Grace;
"O Roger, thou, unskill'd in art,
Must, surer bound, go thro' thy part!"
Now Kitty, pert, repeats the rhymes,
And Roger turns him round three times;
Then pauses ere he starts—but Dick
Was mischief bent upon a trick:
Down on his hands and knees he lay,
Directly in the Blind-man's way—
Then cries out, "Hem!" Hodge heard, and ran
With hood-wink'd chance—sure of his man;
But down he came.—Alas! how frail
Our best of hopes, how soon they fail!
With crimson drops he stains the ground;
Confusion startles all around!

Poor piteous Dick supports his head,
And fain would cure the hurt he made;
But Kitty hasted with a key,
And down his back they straight convey
The cold relief—the blood is stay'd,
And Hodge again holds up his head.
Such are the fortunes of the game,
And those who play should stop the same
By wholesome laws: such as,—all those
Who on the blinded man impose
Stand in his stead; as, long a-gone,
When men were first a nation grown;
Lawless they liv'd till wantonness—
And liberty began t' increase;
And one man lay in another's way,
Then laws were made to keep fair play.

SONGS OF INNOCENCE.

1789.

WILLIAM BLAKE.

I. INTRODUCTION.

PIPING down the valleys wild,
Piping songs of pleasant glee,
On a cloud I saw a child,
And he laughing said to me:

"Pipe a song about a Lamb!"
So I piped with merry cheer.
"Piper, pipe that song again;"
So I piped: he wept to hear.

"Drop thy pipe, thy happy pipe;
Sing thy songs of happy cheer!"
So I sang the same again,
While he wept with joy to hear.

"Piper, sit thee down and write
In a book, that all may read."
So he vanished from my sight;
And I plucked a hollow reed,

And I made a rural pen,
And I stained the water clear,
And I wrote my happy songs
Every child may joy to hear.

II. THE LAMB.

LITTLE Lamb, who made thee?
Dost thou know who made thee,
Gave thee life, and bade thee feed
By the stream and o'er the mead;
Gave thee clothing of delight,
Softest clothing, woolly, bright;
Gave thee such a tender voice,
Making all the vales rejoice?
Little Lamb, who made thee?
Dost thou know who made thee?

Little Lamb, I'll tell thee;
Little Lamb, I'll tell thee:
He is callèd by thy name,
For He calls Himself a Lamb.
He is meek, and He is mild,
He became a little child.
I a child, and thou a lamb,
We are callèd by His name.
Little Lamb, God bless thee!
Little Lamb, God bless thee!

III. THE LITTLE BLACK BOY.

MY mother bore me in the southern wild,
And I am black, but O my soul is white!
White as an angel is the English child,
But I am black, as if bereaved of light.

My mother taught me underneath a tree,
And, sitting down before the heat of day,
She took me on her lap and kissèd me,
And, pointing to the East, began to say:

"Look on the rising sun: there God does live,
And gives his light, and gives his heat away,
And flowers and trees and beasts and men receive
Comfort in morning, joy in the noon day.

"And we are put on earth a little space,
That we may learn to bear the beams of love;
And these black bodies and this sunburnt face
Are but a cloud, and like a shady grove.

"For, when our souls have learned the heat to bear
The cloud will vanish, we shall hear his voice,
Saying, 'Come out from the grove, my love and care,
And round my golden tent like lambs rejoice.'"

Thus did my mother say, and kissèd me,
And thus I say to little English boy.
When I from black, and he from white cloud free,
And round the tent of God like lambs we joy,

I'll shade him from the heat till he can bear
To lean in joy upon our Father's knee;
And then I'll stand and stroke his silver hair,
And be like him, and he will then love me.

IV. NIGHT.

THE sun descending in the west,
The evening star does shine;
The birds are silent in their nest,
And I must seek for mine.
The moon, like a flower
In heaven's high bower,
With silent delight,
Sits and smiles on the night.

Farewell, green fields and happy grove,
Where flocks have ta'en delight.
Where lambs have nibbled, silent move
The feet of angels bright;
  Unseen, they pour blessing,
  And joy without ceasing,
  On each bud and blossom,
  And each sleeping bosom.

They look in every thoughtless nest
Where birds are covered warm;
They visit caves of every beast,
To keep them all from harm:
  If they see any weeping
  That should have been sleeping,
  They pour sleep on their head
  And sit down by their bed.

When wolves and tigers howl for prey,
They pitying stand and weep,
Seeking to drive their thirst away,
And keep them from the sheep.
  But, if they rush dreadful,
  The angels, most heedful,
  Receive each mild spirit,
  New worlds to inherit.

And there the lion's ruddy eyes
Shall flow with tears of gold:
And pitying the tender cries,
And walking round the fold:
  Saying: "Wrath by His meekness,
  And, by His health, sickness,
  Are driven away
  From our immortal day.

"And now beside thee, bleating lamb,
I can lie down and sleep,
Or think on Him who bore thy name,
Graze after thee, and weep.
For, washed in life's river,
My bright mane for ever
Shall shine like the gold,
As I guard o'er the fold."

V. INFANT JOY.

"I HAVE no name;
I am but two days old."
What shall I call thee?
"I happy am,
Joy is my name."
Sweet joy befall thee!

Pretty joy!
Sweet joy, but two days old.
Sweet joy I call thee;
Thou dost smile,
I sing the while;
Sweet joy befall thee!

VI. A DREAM.

ONCE a dream did weave a shade
O'er my Angel-guarded bed,
That an Emmet lost its way
Where on grass methought I lay.

Troubled, 'wilder'd, and forlorn,
Dark, benighted, travel-worn,
Over many a tangled spray,
All heart-broke, I heard her say :

"Oh my children! do they cry,
Do they hear their father sigh?
Now they look abroad to see,
Now return and weep for me."

Pitying, I dropp'd a tear:
But I saw a glow-worm near,
Who replied, "What wailing wight
Calls the watchman of the night?

"I am set to light the ground,
While the beetle goes his round:
Follow now the beetle's hum;
Little wanderer, hie thee home!"

VII. ON ANOTHER'S SORROW.

CAN I see another's woe,
And not be in sorrow too?
Can I see another's grief,
And not seek for kind relief?

Can I see a falling tear,
And not feel my sorrow's share?
Can a father see his child
Weep, nor be with sorrow fill'd?

Can a mother sit and hear
An infant groan, an infant fear?
No, no! never can it be!
Never, never can it be!

And can He who smiles on all
Hear the wren with sorrows small,
Hear the small bird's grief and care
Hear the woes that infants bear—

And not sit beside the nest,
Pouring pity in their breast,
And not sit the cradle near,
Weeping tear on infant's tear?

And not sit both night and day,
Wiping all our tears away?
O! no, never can it be!
Never, never can it be!

He doth give his joy to all:
He becomes an infant small,
He becomes a man of woe,
He doth feel the sorrow too.

Think not thou canst sigh a sigh,
And thy Maker is not by:
Think not thou canst weep a tear,
And thy Maker is not near.

O! He gives to us his joy,
That our grief He may destroy:
Till our grief is fled and gone
He doth sit by us and moan.

SONGS OF EXPERIENCE.

1794.

WILLIAM BLAKE.

I. THE ANGEL.

I DREAMT a dream! What can it mean?
And that I was a maiden queen
Guarded by an Angel mild:
Witless woe was ne'er beguiled!

And I wept both night and day,
And he wip'd my tears away;
And I wept both day and night,
And hid from him my heart's delight.

So he took his wings, and fled;
Then the morn blush'd rosy red.
I dried my tears, and armed my fears
With ten-thousand shields and spears.

Soon my Angel came again;
I was armed, he came in vain;
For the time of youth was fled,
And grey hairs were on my head.

II. THE TIGER.

TIGER, Tiger, burning bright
In the forests of the night,
What immortal hand or eye
Could frame thy fearful symmetry?

In what distant deeps or skies
Burnt the fire of thine eyes?[2]
On what wings dare he aspire?
What the hand dare seize the fire?

And what shoulder and what art
Could twist the sinews of thy heart?
And, when thy heart began to beat,[3]
What dread hand and what dread feet?

What the hammer? what the chain?[4]
In what furnace was thy brain?
What the anvil? what dread grasp
Dare its deadly terrors clasp?

When the stars threw down their spears,
And water'd heaven with their tears,
Did He smile His work to see?
Did He who made the Lamb make thee?

Tiger, Tiger, burning bright
In the forests of the night,
What immortal hand or eye
Dare frame thy fearful symmetry?

LATER RENDERINGS.

1 Framed thy fearful symmetry?

2 Burned that fire within thine eyes?

3 When thy heart began to beat,
What dread hand formed thy dread feet?

4 What the hammer, what the chain,
Knit thy strength and forged thy brain?
What the anvil? what dread grasp
Dared thy deadly terrors clasp?

III. A POISON TREE.

I WAS angry with my friend ;
I told my wrath, my wrath did end.
I was angry with my foe ;
I told it not, my wrath did grow.

And I watered it in fears
Night and morning with my tears,
And I sunnèd it with smiles
And with soft deceitful wiles.

And it grew both day and night
Till it bore an apple bright,
And my foe beheld it shine,
And he knew that it was mine,—

And into my garden stole
When the night had veil'd the pole :
In the morning, glad, I see
My foe outstretched beneath the tree.

IV. TO TIRZAH.

WHATE'ER is born of mortal birth
Must be consumèd with the earth,
To rise from generation free :
Then what have I to do with thee ?

The sexes sprang from shame and pride,
Blown in the morn, in evening died ;
But mercy changed death into sleep ;
The sexes rose to work and weep.

Thou, mother of my mortal part,
With cruelty didst mould my heart,
And with false self-deceiving tears
Didst bind my nostrils, eyes, and ears ;

Didst close my tongue in senseless clay,
And me to mortal life betray.
The death of Jesus set me free:
Then what have I to do with thee?

V. A LITTLE BOY LOST.

"NOUGHT loves another as itself,
Nor venerates another so,
Nor is it possible to thought
A greater than itself to know.

"And, Father, how can I love you
Or any of my brothers more?
I love you like the little bird
That picks up crumbs around the door."

The Priest sat by and heard the child;
In trembling zeal he seized his hair,
He led him by his little coat,
And all admired the Priestly care.

And standing on the altar high,
"Lo, what a fiend is here!" said he:
"One who sets reason up for judge
Of our most holy Mystery."

The weeping child could not be heard,
The weeping parents wept in vain:
They stripped him to his little shirt,
And bound him in an iron chain,

And burn'd him in a holy place
Where many had been burn'd before;
The weeping parents wept in vain.
Are such things done on Albion's shore?

LATER POEMS.

WILLIAM BLAKE.

1. AUGURIES OF INNOCENCE.

TO see a world in a grain of sand,
And a heaven in a wild flower;
Hold infinity in the palm of your hand,
And eternity in an hour.

A Robin Redbreast in a cage
Puts all Heaven in a rage;
A dove-house filled with doves and pigeons
Shudders hell through all its regions.
A dog starved at his master's gate
Predicts the ruin of the State;
A game-cock clipped and armed for fight
Doth the rising sun affright;
A horse misused upon the road
Calls to Heaven for human blood.
Every wolf's and lion's howl
Raises from Hell a human soul;
Each outcry of the hunted hare
A fibre from the brain doth tear;
A skylark wounded on the wing
Doth make a cherub cease to sing.

He who shall hurt the little wren
Shall never be beloved by men;
He who the ox to wrath has moved
Shall never be by woman loved;

He who shall train the horse to war
Shall never pass the Polar Bar.
The wanton boy that kills the fly
Shall feel the spider's enmity;
He who torments the chafer's sprite
Weaves a bower in endless night.
The caterpillar on the leaf
Repeats to thee thy mother's grief:
The wild deer wandering here and there
Keep the human soul from care:
The lamb misused breeds public strife,
And yet forgives the butcher's knife.
Kill not the moth nor butterfly,
For the last judgment draweth nigh;
The beggar's dog and widow's cat,
Feed them and thou shalt grow fat.
Every tear from every eye
Becomes a babe in Eternity;
The bleat, the bark, bellow and roar,
Are waves that beat on Heaven's shore.

The bat that flits at close of eve
Has left the brain that won't believe;
The owl that calls upon the night
Speaks the unbeliever's fright.
The gnat that sings his summer's song
Poison gets from Slander's tongue;
The poison of the snake and newt
Is the sweat of Envy's foot;
The poison of the honey-bee
Is the artist's jealousy;
The strongest poison ever known
Came from Cæsar's laurel-crown.

Nought can deform the human race
Like to the armourer's iron brace;
The soldier armed with sword and gun
Palsied strikes the summer's sun.
When gold and gems adorn the plough,
To peaceful arts shall Envy bow.
The beggar's rags fluttering in air
Do to rags the heavens tear;
The prince's robes and beggar's rags
Are toadstools on the miser's bags.
One mite wrung from the labourer's hands
Shall buy and sell the miser's lands,
Or, if protected from on high,
Shall that whole nation sell and buy;
The poor man's farthing is worth more
Than all the gold on Afric's shore.
The whore and gambler, by the state
Licensed, build that nation's fate;
The harlot's cry from street to street
Shall weave old England's winding-sheet;
The winner's shout, the loser's curse,
Shall dance before dead England's hearse.

He who mocks the infant's faith
Shall be mocked in age and death;
He who shall teach the child to doubt
The rotting grave shall ne'er get out;
He who respects the infant's faith
Triumphs over hell and death.
The babe is more than swaddling-bands
Throughout all these human lands;
Tools were made, and born were hands,
Every farmer understands.

The questioner who sits so sly
Shall never know how to reply.
He who replies to words of doubt
Doth put the light of knowledge out;
A puddle, or the cricket's cry,
Is to doubt a fit reply.
The child's toys and the old man's reasons
Are the fruits of the two seasons.
The emmet's inch and eagle's mile
Make lame philosophy to smile.
A truth that's told with bad intent
Beats all the lies you can invent.
He who doubts from what he sees
Will ne'er believe, do what you please;
If the sun and moon should doubt,
They'd immediately go out.

Every night and every morn
Some to misery are born;
Every morn and every night
Some are born to sweet delight;
Some are born to sweet delight,
Some are born to endless night.
Joy and woe are woven fine,
A clothing for the soul divine;
Under every grief and pine
Runs a joy with silken twine.
It is right it should be so;
Man was made for joy and woe;
And, when this we rightly know,
Safely through the world we go.

We are led to believe a lie
When we see *with* not *through* the eye,

Which was born in a night to perish in a night
When the soul slept in beams of light.
God appears and God is light
To those poor souls who dwell in night:
But doth a human form display
To those who dwell in realms of day.

II. THE DEFILED SANCTUARY.

I SAW a chapel all of gold,
That none did dare to enter in,
And many weeping stood without,
Weeping, mourning, worshipping.

I saw a serpent rise between
The white pillars of the door,
And he forced, and forced, and forced,
Till he the golden hinges tore:

And along the pavement sweet,
Set with pearls and rubies bright,
All his shining length he drew,
Till upon the altar white

He vomited his poison out
On the bread and on the wine.
So I turned into a sty,
And laid me down among the swine.

III. BROKEN LOVE.

MY Spectre around me night and day
Like a wild beast guards my way;
My Emanation far within
Weeps incessantly for my sin.

A fathomless and boundless deep,
There we wander, there we weep;
On the hungry craving wind
My Spectre follows thee behind.

He scents thy footsteps in the snow,
Wheresoever thou dost go;
Through the wintry hail and rain
When wilt thou return again?

Poor pale pitiable form
That I follow in a storm,
From sin I never shall be free
Till thou forgive and come to me.

A deep winter dark and cold,
Within my heart thou dost unfold;
Iron tears and groans of lead
Thou bind'st around my aching head.

Dost thou not in pride and scorn
Fill with tempests all my morn,
And with jealousies and fears?—
And fill my pleasant nights with tears?

O'er *my* sins thou dost sit and moan:
Hast thou no sins of thine own?
O'er *my* sins thou dost sit and weep,
And lull thine own sins fast asleep.

Thy weeping thou shalt ne'er give o'er;
I sin against thee more and more,
And never will from sin be free
Till thou forgive and come to me.

What transgressions I commit
Are for thy transgressions fit,—
They thy harlots, thou their slave;
And my bed becomes their grave.

Seven of my sweet loves thy knife
Hath bereavèd of their life:
Their marble tombs I built with tears
And with cold and shadowy fears.

Seven more loves weep night and day
Round the tombs where my loves lay,
And seven more loves attend at night
Around my couch with torches bright.

And seven more loves in my bed
Crown with vine my mournful head;
Pitying and forgiving all
Thy transgressions, great and small.

When wilt thou return, and view
My loves, and them in life renew?
When wilt thou return and live?
When wilt thou pity as I forgive?

Throughout all Eternity
I forgive you, you forgive me.
As our dear Reedemer said:
"This the wine, and this the bread."

IV. THE TWO SONGS.

I HEARD an Angel singing
When the day was springing:
"Mercy, Pity, and Peace,
Are the world's release."

So he sang all day
Over the new-mown hay,
Till the sun went down,
And haycocks looked brown.

I heard a Devil curse
Over the heath and furse:
"Mercy could be no more
If there were nobody poor,
And Pity no more could be
If all were happy as ye:
And mutual fear brings Peace.
Misery's increase
Are Mercy, Pity, Peace."

At his curse the sun went down,
And the heavens gave a frown.

V. LOVE'S SECRET.

NEVER seek to tell thy love,
Love that never told can be;
For the gentle wind doth move
Silently, invisibly.

I told my love, I told my love,
I told her all my heart,
Trembling, cold, in ghastly fears.
Ah! she did depart.

Soon after she was gone from me,
A traveller came by,
Silently, invisibly:
He took her with a sigh.

VI. THE LAND OF DREAMS.

"AWAKE, awake, my little boy!
Thou wast thy mother's only joy.
Why dost thou weep in thy gentle sleep?
O, wake! thy father doth thee keep."

"O, what land is the land of dreams?
What are its mountains and what are its streams?
"O, father! I saw my mother there,
Among the lilies by waters fair.

"Among the lambs clothèd in white,
She walked with her Thomas in sweet delight.
I wept for joy, like a dove I mourn—
O when shall I again return?"

"Dear child! I also by pleasant streams
Have wandered all night in the land of dreams;
But, though calm and warm the waters wide,
I could not get to the other side."

"Father, O father! what do we here,
In this land of unbelief and fear?
The land of dreams is better far,
Above the light of the morning star."

VII. THE BIRDS.

HE.

WHERE thou dwellest, in what grove,
Tell me, fair one, tell me, love;
Where thou thy charming nest dost build,
O thou pride of every field!

SHE.

Yonder stands a lonely tree:
There I live and mourn for thee.
Morning drinks my silent tear,
And evening winds my sorrow bear.

HE.

O thou summer's harmony,
I have lived and mourned for thee;
Each day I moan along the wood,
And night hath heard my sorrows loud.

SHE.

Dost thou truly long for me?
And am I thus sweet to thee?
Sorrow now is at an end,
O my lover and my friend!

HE.

Come! on wings of joy we'll fly
To where my bower is hung on high;
Come, and make thy calm retreat
Among green leaves and blossoms sweet.

Samuel Rogers.

1763—1855.

Samuel Rogers, the son of a London banker, was born at Newington Green, July 30th, 1763. He was privately educated, and entered his father's banking house, in which he became a partner.

The poet's ambition was fired by the perusal of Beattie's "Minstrel," when but nine years old; and he was so far carried away by his literary enthusiasm, that, at the age of fourteen, he twice called at the house of Dr. Johnson, in Bolt Court, in the hope of seeing the great critic and moralist. On the first occasion the doctor was unfortunately not at home, and on the second the young poet's heart misgave him, and, having rung the bell, he ran away. While yet in his teens, he commenced his literary career by contributing a series of essays to the *Gentleman's Magazine*, under the title of "The Scribbler," 1781. These were followed in 1786 by his "Ode to Superstition," and other poems; and in 1792 by the poem usually associated with his name, "The Pleasures of Memory." This work, written in English rhymed heroics, and published at a time when poetry was at a very low ebb, attracted great attention, and excited general admiration. In 1798 appeared the "Epistle to a Friend," deemed by some the poet's best work, as being more within the scope of his powers. It has certainly

a brightness and vivacity of movement not so evident in his longer poems, though he touches in it the very reverse of his actual life and experience. The following lines, quoted from the first edition, will at once illustrate the spirit and style of this Epistle, and the heartiness and geniality of the poet:—

"In vain, alas, a village-friend invites
To simple comforts, and domestic rites,
When the gay months of Carnival resume
Their annual round of glitter and perfume;
When Bond-street hails thee to its splendid mart,
Its hives of sweets, and cabinets of art;
And, lo, majestic as thy manly song,
Flows the full tide of human life along.

Still must my partial pencil love to dwell
On the home-prospects of my hermit-cell;
The mossy pales that skirt the orchard-green,
Here hid by shrub-wood, there by glimpses seen;
And the brown pathway, that, with careless flow,
Sinks, and is lost among the trees below.
Still must it trace (the flattering tints forgive)
Each fleeting charm that bids the landscape live.
Oft o'er the mead, at pleasing distance, pass
Browsing the hedge by fits the pannier'd ass;
The idling shepherd-boy, with rude delight,
Whistling his dog to mark the pebble's flight;
And in her kerchief blue the cottage-maid,
With brimming pitcher from the shadowy glade.
Far to the south a mountain-vale retires,
Rich in its groves, and glens, and village-spires;
Its upland-lawns, and cliffs with foliage hung,
Its wizard-stream, nor nameless nor unsung:
And thro' the various year, the various day,
What scenes of glory burst, and melt away!

When April-verdure springs in Grosvenor-square,
And the furr'd Beauty comes to winter there,
She bids old Nature mar the plan no more,
Yet still the seasons circle as before.

Ah, still as soon the young Aurora plays,
Tho' moons and flambeaux trail their broadest blaze;
As soon the sky-lark pours his matin-song,
Tho' Evening lingers at the Masque so long.

There let her strike with momentary ray,
As tapers shine their little lives away;
There let her practise from herself to steal,
And look the happiness she does not feel;
The ready smile and bidden blush employ
At Faro-routs that dazzle to destroy;
Fan with affected ease the essenc'd air,
And lisp of fashions with unmeaning stare.
Be thine to meditate an humbler flight,
When morning fills the fields with rosy light;
Be thine to blend, nor thine a vulgar aim,
Repose with dignity, with Quiet fame.

Here no state-chambers in long line unfold,
Bright with broad mirrors, rough with fretted gold;
Yet modest ornament, with use combin'd,
Attracts the eye to exercise the mind.
Small change of scene, small space his home requires,
Who leads a life of satisfied desires.

* * * * * *

O come, and, rich in intellectual wealth,
Blend thought with exercise, with knowledge health;
Long, in this shelter'd scene of letter'd talk,
With sober step repeat the pensive walk;
Nor scorn, when graver triflings fail to please;
The cheap amusements of a mind at ease;
Here every care in sweet oblivion cast,
And many an idle hour—not idly pass'd."

After a lapse of fourteen years, "The Voyage of Columbus" appeared in 1812, followed by "Jacqueline: a Tale," published in company with Byron's "Lara" in 1813. "Human Life" followed in 1819, and "Italy," which was subsequently largely added to, in 1822, the complete edition being issued in 1834.

At the age of thirty, Rogers retired from the

active management of the bank, and devoted himself entirely to literature and society. Prior to 1803, he occupied rooms in the Temple, from whence he removed to No. 22, St. James's Place, a house overlooking the Green Park, which became a rendezvous for the illustrious in literature and art. During his long life the poet accumulated such stores of art-treasures, that on his death they realised £50,000; many of them finding their way to the National Gallery and the British Museum. Byron, writing of this house, says:—"If you enter his house—his drawing-room, his library—you of yourself say, This is not the dwelling of a common mind. There is not a gem, a coin, a book thrown aside on his chimney-piece, his sofa, his table, that does not bespeak an almost fastidious elegance in the possessor." Such was the house in which Rogers gathered round him the most brilliant company of his time.

The poet's later years were devoted to the superintendence of the issue of his "Italy" and "Poems," with illustrations by Stothard and Turner, the originals of which, with the exception of that of "The Hospice of St. Bernard's," are now in the National Gallery. On the death of Wordsworth in 1850, the office of Laureate was offered to Rogers by Prince Albert, but declined upon the ground of age. Shortly after this, a fall in the street injured the poet so much that he was ever afterwards confined to his chair. He died December 18th, 1855.

As a man, Rogers presents the singular contrast of good-natured actions with ill-natured words. His generosity cheered the last hours of Sheridan, and in countless instances relieved the necessities of

suffering and neglected talent; while it was probably his ill-natured speech that embittered Byron towards him and drew upon him "the greatest of modern satirical portraits in verse," which, entitled "Question and Answer," appeared in *Fraser's Magazine* after Byron's death. He was a brilliant conversationalist, a genial and accomplished host, and in his best days entertained such gatherings of genius as have probably never since assembled. Scott, Byron, Moore, Crabbe, Campbell, Fox, Canning, Grattan, Porson, and Erskine, were all among the visitors who received from him a poet's welcome and an Englishman's hospitality.

Rogers was a poet of *culture*. His workmanship is artistic in a high degree, his diction as clear and polished as art can make it, and his versification everywhere elegant, refined, and graceful. He paints us finely-finished pictures, suffused with soft and mellow light, and exhibits them in carefully carven frames—pictures that awaken gentle sympathy and stimulate quiet thought—pictures that please without moving us. He is often tender in sentiment and wise in reflection; but he lacks force and originality, and is altogether destitute of passion. He never annoys us with the faults of taste and style which disfigure the writings of some greater poets; but, on the other hand, he never thrills our emotions nor fires our imaginations as they do. He manipulates the heroic couplet with skill and grace in both "The Pleasures of Memory" and "Human Life," and in the latter poem reaches lower depths of feeling than in the former. His blank verse is smooth, easy, and graceful, and at the same time sufficiently varied to prevent mono-

tony. Wisely adopted for his "Italy," his longest work, it serves well for the setting of the many cameos of Italian life and legend which he has enshrined therein. Wanting in the higher qualities of a poet he may perhaps, be best described as a scholarly and accomplished writer of polished and refined verse. The poet's estimate of himself, written in 1839, in his farewell to the readers of "Italy," does honour to his own self-judgment :—

"Nature denied him much,
But gave him at his birth what most he values,
A passionate love for music, sculpture, painting,
For poetry, the language of the gods,
For all things here, or grand or beautiful,
A setting sun, a lake among the mountains,
The light of an ingenuous countenance,
And what transcends them all, a noble action.
Nature denied him much, but gave him more;
And ever, ever grateful should he be,
Though from his cheek, ere yet the down was there,
Health fled; for in his heaviest hours would come
Gleams such as come not now; nor failed he then,
(Then and through life his happiest privilege)
Full oft to wander where the Muses haunt,
Smit with the love of song.
'Tis now long since;
And now, while yet 'tis day, would he withdraw,
Who, when in youth he strung his lyre, addressed
A former generation. Many an eye,
Bright as the brightest now, is closed in night,
And many a voice, how eloquent, is mute,
That, when he came, disdained not to receive
His lays with favour."

ALFRED H. MILES.

SONGS.

SAMUEL ROGERS.

I.

A WISH.

1786.

MINE be a cot beside the hill;
A bee-hive's hum shall soothe my ear;
A willowy brook, that turns a mill,
With many a fall shall linger near.

The swallow, oft, beneath my thatch,
Shall twitter from her clay-built nest;
Oft shall the pilgrim lift the latch,
And share my meal, a welcome guest.

Around my ivy'd porch shall spring
Each fragrant flower that drinks the dew;
And Lucy, at her wheel, shall sing
In russet-gown and apron blue.

The village-church among the trees,
Where first our marriage-vows were given,
With merry peals shall swell the breeze,
And point with taper spire to heaven.

II.

THE SAILOR.

1786.

THE Sailor sighs as sinks his native shore,
As all its lessening turrets bluely fade;
He climbs the mast to feast his eye once more,
And busy fancy fondly lends her aid.

Ah! now, each dear, domestic scene he knew,
Recalled and cherished in a foreign clime,
Charms with the magic of a moonlight-view;
Its colours mellowed, not impaired, by time.

True as the needle, homeward points his heart,
Thro' all the horrors of the stormy main;
This, the last wish that would with life depart,
To meet the smile of her he loves again.

When Morn first faintly draws her silver line,
Or Eve's grey cloud descends to drink the wave;
When sea and sky in midnight-darkness join,
Still, still he sees the parting look she gave.

Her gentle spirit, lightly hovering o'er,
Attends his little bark from pole to pole;
And, when the beating billows round him roar,
Whispers sweet hope to soothe his troubled soul.

Carved is her name in many a spicy grove,
In many a plantain-forest, waving wide;
Where dusky youths in painted plumage rove,
And giant palms o'er-arch the golden tide.

But lo, at last he comes with crowded sail!
Lo, o'er the cliff what eager figures bend!
And hark, what mingled murmurs swell the gale!
In each he hears the welcome of a friend.

—'Tis she, 'tis she herself! she waves her hand!
Soon is the anchor cast, the canvas furled;
Soon thro' the whitening surge he springs to land
And clasps the maid he singled from the world.

III.

ON A TEAR.

1793.

OH! that the Chemist's magic art
Could crystallize this sacred treasure!
Long should it glitter near my heart,
A secret source of pensive pleasure.

The little brilliant, ere it fell,
Its lustre caught from Chloe's eye;
Then, trembling, left its coral cell—
The spring of Sensibility!

Sweet drop of pure and pearly light!
In thee the rays of Virtue shine;
More calmly clear, more mildly bright,
Than any gem that gilds the mine.

Benign restorer of the soul!
Who ever fly'st to bring relief,
When first we feel the rude controul
Of Love or Pity, Joy or Grief.

The sage's and the poet's theme,
In every clime, in every age;
Thou charm'st in Fancy's idle dream,
In Reason's philosophic page.

That very law which moulds a tear,
And bids it trickle from its source,
That law preserves the earth a sphere,
And guides the planets in their course.

IV.

TO THE BUTTERFLY.

1806.

CHILD of the sun! pursue thy rapturous flight,
Mingling with her thou lov'st in fields of light;
And, where the flowers of Paradise unfold,
Quaff fragrant nectar from their cups of gold.
There shall thy wings, rich as an evening-sky,
Expand and shut with silent ecstasy!
—Yet wert thou once a worm, a thing that crept
On the bare earth, then wrought a tomb and slept.
And such is man; soon from his cell of clay
To burst a seraph in the blaze of day!

THE PLEASURES OF MEMORY.

1792.

SAMUEL ROGERS.

I.

OPENING LINES. PART I.

TWILIGHT'S soft dews steal o'er the village-green,
With magic tints to harmonize the scene.
Stilled is the hum that thro' the hamlet broke,
When round the ruins of their ancient oak
The peasants flocked to hear the minstrel play,
And games and carols closed the busy day.
Her wheel at rest, the matron thrills no more
With treasured tales, and legendary lore.
All, all are fled; not mirth nor music flows
To chase the dreams of innocent repose.
All, all are fled; yet still I linger here!
What secret charms this silent spot endear?

Mark yon old Mansion frowning thro' the trees,
Whose hollow turret wooes the whistling breeze.
That casement, arched with ivy's brownest shade,
First to these eyes the light of heaven conveyed.
The mouldering gateway strews the grass-grown court,
Once the calm scene of many a simple sport;
When nature pleased, for life itself was new,
And the heart promised what the fancy drew.

See, thro' the fractured pediment revealed,
Where moss inlays the rudely sculptured shield,
The martin's old, hereditary nest:
Long may the ruin spare its hallowed guest!

As jars the hinge, what sullen echoes call!
Oh haste, unfold the hospitable hall!
That hall, where once, in antiquated state,
The chair of justice held the grave debate.

Now stained with dews, with cobwebs darkly hung,
Oft has its roof with peals of rapture rung;
When round yon ample board, in due degree,
We sweetened every meal with social glee.
The heart's light laugh pursued the circling jest;
And all was sunshine in each little breast.
'Twas here we chased the slipper by the sound;
And turned the blindfold hero round and round.
'Twas here, at eve, we formed our fairy ring;
And Fancy fluttered on her wildest wing.
Giants and genii chained each wondering ear;
And orphan-sorrows drew the ready tear.
Oft with the babes we wandered in the wood,
Or viewed the forest-feats of Robin Hood:
Oft, fancy-led, at midnight's fearful hour,
With startling step we scaled the lonely tower;
O'er infant innocence to hang and weep,
Murdered by ruffian hands, when smiling in its sleep.

Ye Household Deities! whose guardian eye
Marked each pure thought, ere registered on high;
Still, still ye walk the consecrated ground,
And breathe the soul of Inspiration round.

As o'er the dusky furniture I bend,
Each chair awakes the feelings of a friend.

The storied arras, source of fond delight,
With old achievement charms the wildered sight;
And still, with Heraldry's rich hues imprest,
On the dim window glows the pictured crest.
The screen unfolds its many-coloured chart.
The clock still points its moral to the heart.
That faithful monitor 'twas heaven to hear,
When soft it spoke a promised pleasure near;
And has its sober hand, its simple chime,
Forgot to trace the feathered feet of Time?
That massive beam, with curious carvings wrought,
Whence the caged linnet soothed my pensive thought;
Those muskets, cased with venerable rust;
Those once-loved forms, still breathing thro' their dust,
Still, from the frame in mould gigantic cast,
Starting to life—all whisper of the Past!

As thro' the garden's desert paths I rove,
What fond illusions swarm in every grove!
How oft, when purple evening tinged the west,
We watched the emmet to her grainy nest;
Welcomed the wild-bee home on weary wing,
Laden with sweets, the choicest of the spring!
How oft inscribed, with Friendship's votive rhyme,
The bark now silvered by the touch of Time;
Soared in the swing, half pleased and half afraid,
Thro' sister elms that waved their summer-shade;
Or strewed with crumbs yon root-inwoven seat,
To lure the redbreast from his lone retreat!

Childhood's loved group revisits every scene;
The tangled wood-walk and the tufted green!
Indulgent Memory wakes, and lo, they live!
Clothed with far softer hues than light can give.

II.

CLOSING LINES. PART II.

But is Her magic only felt below?
Say, thro' what brighter realms she bids it flow;
To what pure beings, in a nobler sphere,
She yields delight but faintly imaged here:
All that till now their rapt researches knew,
Not called in slow succession to review;
But, as a landscape meets the eye of day,
At once presented to their glad survey!

Each scene of bliss revealed, since chaos fled,
And dawning light its dazzling glories spread;
Each chain of wonders that sublimely glowed,
Since first Creation's choral anthem flowed;
Each ready flight, at Mercy's call divine,
To distant worlds that undiscovered shine;
Full on her tablet flings its living rays,
And all, combined, with blest effulgence blaze.

There thy bright train, immortal Friendship, soar;
No more to part, to mingle tears no more!
And, as the softening hand of Time endears
The joys and sorrows of our infant-years,
So there the soul, released from human strife,
Smiles at the little cares and ills of life;
Its lights and shades, its sunshine and its showers;
As at a dream that charmed her vacant hours!

Oft may the spirits of the dead descend
To watch the silent slumbers of a friend;
To hover round his evening walk unseen,
And hold sweet converse on the dusky green;
To hail the spot where first their friendship grew,
And heaven and nature opened to their view!
Oft, when he trims his cheerful hearth, and sees
A smiling circle emulous to please;
There may these gentle guests delight to dwell,
And bless the scene they loved in life so well!

Oh thou! with whom my heart was wont to share
From Reason's dawn each pleasure and each care;
With whom, alas! I fondly hoped to know
The humble walks of happiness below;
If thy blest nature now unites above
An angel's pity with a brother's love,
Still o'er my life preserve thy mild controul,
Correct my views, and elevate my soul;
Grant me thy peace and purity of mind,
Devout yet cheerful, active yet resigned;
Grant me, like thee, whose heart knew no disguise,
Whose blameless wishes never aimed to rise,
To meet the changes Time and Chance present,
With modest dignity and calm content.
When thy last breath, ere Nature sunk to rest,
Thy meek submission to thy God expressed;
When thy last look, ere thought and feeling fled,
A mingled gleam of hope and triumph shed;
What to thy soul its glad assurance gave,
Its hope in death, its triumph o'er the grave?
The sweet Remembrance of unblemished youth,
The still inspiring voice of Innocence and Truth!

Hail, Memory, hail! in thy exhaustless mine
From age to age unnumbered treasures shine!
Thought and her shadowy brood thy call obey,
And Place and Time are subject to thy sway!
Thy pleasures most we feel, when most alone;
The only pleasures we can call our own.
Lighter than air, Hope's summer-visions die,
If but a fleeting cloud obscure the sky;
If but a beam of sober Reason play,
Lo, Fancy's fairy frost-work melts away!
But can the wiles of Art, the grasp of Power,
Snatch the rich relics of a well-spent hour?
These, when the trembling spirit wings her flight,
Pour round her path a stream of living light;
And gild those pure and perfect realms of rest,
Where Virtue triumphs, and her sons are blest!

HUMAN LIFE.

1819.

SAMUEL ROGERS.

I.

OPENING LINES.

THE lark has sung his carol in the sky;
The bees have hummed their noon-tide harmony.
Still in the vale the village-bells ring round,
Still in Llewellyn-hall the jests resound:
For now the caudle-cup is circling there,
Now, glad at heart, the gossips breathe their prayer,
And, crowding, stop the cradle to admire
The babe, the sleeping image of his sire.

A few short years—and then these sounds shall hail
The day again, and gladness fill the vale;
So soon the child a youth, the youth a man,
Eager to run the race his fathers ran.
Then the huge ox shall yield the broad sir-loin;
The ale, now brewed, in floods of amber shine:
And, basking in the chimney's ample blaze,
Mid many a tale told of his boyish days,
The nurse shall cry, of all her ills beguiled,
"'Twas on these knees he sate so oft and smiled."

And soon again shall music swell the breeze;
Soon, issuing forth, shall glitter through the trees

Vestures of nuptial white; and hymns be sung,
And violets scattered round; and old and young,
In every cottage-porch with garlands green,
Stand still to gaze, and, gazing, bless the scene;
While, her dark eyes declining, by his side
Moves in her virgin-veil the gentle bride.

And once, alas, nor in a distant hour,
Another voice shall come from yonder tower;
When in dim chambers long black weeds are seen,
And weepings heard where only joy has been;
When by his children borne, and from his door
Slowly departing to return no more,
He rests in holy earth with them that went before.

And such is Human Life; so, gliding on,
It glimmers like a meteor, and is gone!

* * * * * *

Our pathway leads but to a precipice;
And all must follow, fearful as it is!
From the first step 'tis known; but—No delay!
On, 'tis decreed. We tremble and obey.
A thousand ills beset us as we go.
—"Still, could I shun the fatal gulf"—Ah, no,
'Tis all in vain—the inexorable Law!
Nearer and nearer to the brink we draw.
Verdure springs up; and fruits and flowers invite,
And groves and fountains—all things that delight.
"Oh, I would stop, and linger if I might!"—
We fly; no resting for the foot we find;
All dark before, all desolate behind!
At length the brink appears—but one step more!
We faint—On, on!—we falter—and 'tis o'er!

II.

CLOSING LINES.

And now behold him up the hill ascending,
Memory and Hope like evening-stars attending;
Sustained, excited, till his course is run,
By deeds of virtue done or to be done.
When on his couch he sinks at length to rest,
Those by his counsel saved, his power redressed,
Those by the World shunned ever as unblest,
At whom the rich man's dog growls from the gate,
But whom he sought out, sitting desolate,
Come and stand round—the widow with her child,
As when she first forgot her tears and smiled!
They, who watch by him, see not; but he sees,
Sees and exults—Were ever dreams like these?
They, who watch by him, hear not; but he hears,
And Earth recedes, and Heaven itself appears!

'Tis past! That hand we grasped, alas, in vain!
Nor shall we look upon his face again!
But to his closing eyes, for all were there,
Nothing was wanting; and, through many a year
We shall remember with a fond delight
The words so precious which we heard to-night;
His parting, though awhile our sorrow flows,
Like setting suns or music at the close!

Then was the drama ended. Not till then,
So full of chance and change the lives of men,
Could we pronounce him happy. Then secure
From pain, from grief, and all that we endure,

He slept in peace—say rather soared to Heaven,
Upborne from Earth by Him to whom 'tis given
In his right hand to hold the golden key
That opes the portals of Eternity.
—When by a good man's grave I muse alone.
Methinks an Angel sits upon the stone,
And, with a voice inspiring joy not fear,
Says, pointing upward, "Know, He is not here!"

But let us hence; for now the day is spent,
And stars are kindling in the firmament,
To us how silent—though like ours perchance
Busy and full of life and circumstance;
Where some the paths of Wealth and Power pursue,
Of Pleasure some, of Happiness a few;
And, as the sun goes round—a sun not ours—
While from her lap another Nature showers
Gifts of her own, some from the crowd retire,
Think on themselves, within, without inquire;
At distance dwell on all that passes there,
All that their world reveals of good and fair;
Trace out the Journey through their little Day,
And dream, like me, an idle hour away.

ITALY

1822—34.

SAMUEL ROGERS.

I.

BERGAMO.

THE song was one that I had heard before,
But where I knew not. It inclined to sadness;
And, turning round from the delicious fare
My landlord's little daughter Barbara
Had from her apron just rolled out before me,
Figs and rock-melons—at the door I saw
Two boys of lively aspect. Peasant-like
They were, and poorly clad, but not unskilled;
With their small voices and an old guitar
Winning their way to my unguarded heart
In that, the only universal tongue.
But soon they changed the measure, entering on
A pleasant dialogue of sweet and sour,
A war of words, with looks and gestures waged
Between Trappanti and his ancient dame,
Mona Lucilia. To and fro it went;
While many a titter on the stairs was heard,
And Barbara's among them. When it ceased,
Their dark eyes flashed no longer, yet, methought,
In many a glance as from the soul, disclosed
More than enough to serve them. Far or near,
Few looked not for their coming ere they came,
Few, when they went, but looked till they were gone;

And not a matron, sitting at her wheel,
But could repeat their story. Twins they were,
And orphans, as I learnt, cast on the world;
Their parents lost in an old ferry-boat
That, three years since, last Martinmas, went down,
Crossing the rough Benacus.

May they live
Blameless and happy—rich they cannot be,
Like him who, in the days of Minstrelsy,
Came in a beggar's weeds to Petrarch's door,
Asking, beseeching for a lay to sing,
And soon in silk (such then the power of song)
Returned to thank him; or like that old man,
Old, not in heart, who by the torrent-side
Descending from the Tyrol, as Night fell,
Knocked at a City-gate near the hill-foot,
The gate that bore so long, sculptured in stone,
An eagle on a ladder, and at once
Found welcome—nightly in the bannered hall
Tuning his harp to tales of Chivalry
Before the great Mastino, and his guests,
The three-and-twenty kings, by adverse fate,
By war or treason or domestic strife,
Reft of their kingdoms, friendless, shelterless,
And living on his bounty.

But who comes,
Brushing the floor with what was once, methinks,
A hat of ceremony? On he glides,
Slip-shod, ungartered; his long suit of black
Dingy, thread-bare, tho', patch by patch, renewed
Till it has almost ceased to be the same.
At length arrived, and with a shrug that pleads
"'Tis my necessity!" he stops and speaks,
Screwing a smile into his dinnerless face.

"Blame not a Poet, Signor, for his zeal—
When all are on the wing, who would be last?
The splendour of thy name has gone before thee;
And Italy from sea to sea exults,
As well indeed she may! But I transgress.
He, who has known the weight of Praise himself,
Should spare another." Saying so, he laid
His sonnet, an impromptu, at my feet,
(If his, then Petrarch must have stolen it from him)
And bowed and left me; in his hollow hand
Receiving my small tribute, a zecchine,
Unconsciously, as doctors do their fees.

My omelet, and a flagon of hill-wine,
Pure as the virgin-spring, had happily
Fled from all eyes; or, in a waking dream,
I might have sat as many a great man has,
And many a small, like him of Santillane,
Bartering my bread and salt for empty praise.

II.

IN ITALY.

AM I in Italy? Is this the Mincius?
Are those the distant turrets of Verona?
And shall I sup where Juliet at the Masque
Saw her loved Montague, and now sleeps by him?
Such questions hourly do I ask myself;
And not a stone, in a cross-way, inscribed
"To Mantua"—"To Ferrara"—but excites
Surprise, and doubt, and self-congratulation.

O Italy, how beautiful thou art!
Yet I could weep—for thou art lying, alas,
Low in the dust; and we admire thee now
As we admire the beautiful in death.

Thine was a dangerous gift, when thou wert born,
The gift of Beauty. Would thou hadst it not;
Or wert as once, awing the caitiffs vile
That now beset thee, making thee their slave!
Would they had loved thee less, or feared thee more!
—But why despair? Twice hast thou lived already;
Twice shone among the nations of the world,
As the sun shines among the lesser lights
Of heaven; and shalt again. The hour shall come,
When they who think to bind the ethereal spirit,
Who, like the eagle cowering o'er his prey,
Watch with quick eye, and strike and strike again
If but a sinew vibrate, shall confess
Their wisdom folly. Even now the flame
Bursts forth where once it burnt so gloriously,
And, dying, left a splendour like the day,
That like the day diffused itself, and still
Blesses the earth—the light of genius, virtue,
Greatness in thought and act, contempt of death,
God-like example. Echoes that have slept
Since Athens, Lacedæmon, were Themselves,
Since men invoked "by those in Marathon!"
Awake along the Ægean; and the dead,
They of that sacred shore, have heard the call,
And thro' the ranks, from wing to wing, are seen
Moving as once they were—instead of rage
Breathing deliberate valour.

III.

GINEVRA.

IF thou shouldst ever come by choice or chance
To Modena, where still religiously
Among her ancient trophies is preserved

Bologna's bucket (in its chain it hangs,
Within that reverend tower, the Guirlandine)
Stop at a Palace near the Reggio-gate,
Dwelt in of old by one of the Orsini.
Its noble gardens, terrace above terrace,
And rich in fountains, statues, cypresses,
Will long detain thee; thro' their arched walks,
Dim at noon-day, discovering many a glimpse
Of knights and dames, such as in old romance,
And lovers, such as in heroic song,
Perhaps the two, for groves were their delight,
That in the spring-time, as alone they sate,
Venturing together on a tale of love,
Read only part that day.——A summer-sun
Sets ere one half is seen; but, ere thou go,
Enter the house—prythee, forget it not—
And look awhile upon a picture there.

'Tis of a Lady in her earliest youth,
The very last of that illustrious race,
Done by Zampieri—but by whom I care not.
He, who observes it—ere he passes on,
Gazes his fill, and comes and comes again,
That he may call it up, when far away.

She sits, inclining forward as to speak,
Her lips half-open, and her finger up,
As though she said "Beware!" her vest of gold
Broidered with flowers, and clasped from head to foot,
An emerald-stone in every golden clasp;
And on her brow, fairer than alabaster,
A coronet of pearls. But then her face,
So lovely, yet so arch, so full of mirth,
The overflowings of an innocent heart—

It haunts me still, though many a year has fled,
Like some wild melody!
Alone it hangs
Over a mouldering heir-loom, its companion,
An oaken-chest, half-eaten by the worm,
But richly carved by Antony of Trent
With scripture-stories from the Life of Christ;
A chest that came from Venice, and had held
The ducal robes of some old Ancestor.
That by the way—it may be true or false—
But don't forget the picture; and thou wilt not,
When thou hast heard the tale they told me there.

She was an only child; from infancy
The joy, the pride of an indulgent Sire.
Her Mother dying of the gift she gave,
That precious gift, what else remained to him?
The young Ginevra was his all in life,
Still as she grew, for ever in his sight;
And in her fifteenth year became a bride,
Marrying an only son, Francesco Doria,
Her playmate from her birth, and her first love.

Just as she looks there in her bridal dress,
She was all gentleness, all gaiety,
Her pranks the favourite theme of every tongue.
But now the day was come, the day, the hour;
Now, frowning, smiling, for the hundredth time,
The nurse, that ancient lady, preached decorum;
And, in the lustre of her youth, she gave
Her hand, with her heart in it, to Francesco.

Great was the joy; but at the Bridal feast,
When all sate down, the Bride was wanting there.
Nor was she to be found! Her Father cried,

"'Tis but to make a trial of our love!"
And filled his glass to all; but his hand shook,
And soon from guest to guest the panic spread.
'Twas but that instant she had left Francesco,
Laughing and looking back and flying still,
Her ivory-tooth imprinted on his finger.
But now, alas, she was not to be found;
Nor from that hour could any thing be guessed,
But that she was not!

Weary of his life,
Francesco flew to Venice, and forthwith
Flung it away in battle with the Turk.
Orsini lived; and long was to be seen
An old man wandering as in quest of something,
Something he could not find—he knew not what.
When he was gone the house remained awhile
Silent and tenantless—then went to strangers.

Full fifty years were past, and all forgot,
When on an idle day, a day of search
Mid the old lumber in the Gallery,
That mouldering chest was noticed; and 'twas said
By one as young, as thoughtless as Ginevra,
"Why not remove it from its lurking place?"
'Twas done as soon as said; but on the way
It burst, it fell; and lo, a skeleton,
With here and there a pearl, an emerald-stone,
A golden clasp, clasping a shred of gold.
All else had perished—save a nuptial ring,
And a small seal, her mother's legacy,
Engraven with a name, the name of both,
"Ginevra."

There then had she found a grave!
Within that chest had she concealed herself,

Fluttering with joy, the happiest of the happy;
When a spring-lock, that lay in ambush there,
Fastened her down for ever!

IV.

THE FIRE-FLY.

THERE is an Insect, that, when Evening comes,
Small though he be and scarce distinguishable,
Like Evening clad in soberest livery,
Unsheaths his wings and thro' the woods and glades
Scatters a marvellous splendour. On he wheels,
Blazing by fits as from excess of joy,
Each gush of light a gush of ecstasy;
Nor unaccompanied; thousands that fling
A radiance all their own, not of the day,
Thousands as bright as he, from dusk till dawn,
Soaring, descending.

In the mother's lap
Well may the child put forth his little hands,
Singing the nursery-song he learnt so soon;
And the young nymph, preparing for the dance
By brook or fountain-side, in many a braid
Wreathing her golden hair, well may she cry,
"Come hither; and the shepherds, gathering round,
Shall say, Floretta emulates the Night,
Spangling her head with stars."

Oft have I met
This shining race, when in the Tusculan groves
My path no longer glimmered; oft among
Those trees, religious once and always green,
That yet dream out their stories of old Rome
Over the Alban lake.

Robert Bloomfield.

1766—1823.

The earliest, if not the first, of the rural poets of the century, Robert Bloomfield, was born at Honington, a village near Bury St. Edmunds, Suffolk, on December 3rd, 1766.

At the time when Crabbe was raising his protest against the false ideals of pastoral life which obtained so largely in the verse of his predecessors; at the very moment when he was writing the familiar lines—

> "Fled are those times, if e'er such times were seen,
> When rustic poets prais'd their native green;"

three poets of rural origin, and life, were preparing to help forward the poetic revival of the time: Robert Burns, the Ayrshire ploughman, was working in the fields at Tarbolton, and had already learned to sing because he had learned to love; James Hogg, the Ettrick shepherd, a child but seven or eight years old, was herding cows among the wilds of Selkirkshire; and nearer home, within a few miles of the spot where the laureate of "The Village" was penning this his first important work, Robert Bloomfield was living the life and preparing himself to sing the song of "The Farmer's Boy."

Although obviously inferior to Burns and Hogg, Bloomfield fills a position of considerable interest

as the earliest of the labour poets of the century. Burns, who died before the century was born, would have been a poet in any environment; he sang of the passions that are common to humanity, and his interest is world-wide and everlasting. Hogg drew his inspiration from historic legends and fairy lore, revelling in old-time romance and the shadow-light of the spirit world. Bloomfield sang of the life and experiences of his own people, in his own time, and came more nearly within the sphere of Crabbe's definition of a "rustic poet" praising "his native green," but with the consequent localising of his interest and limitation of his fame. That his powers confined him to the sphere of his choice is doubtless true, but at least he may be credited with the wisdom that saw their limits, and the humility which was content to work within them.

The poet's father, who was a tailor by trade, survived the birth of his son Robert but one year; his mother was a woman of energy and prudence, who managed to maintain her six fatherless children by keeping a school. With the exception of two or three months spent at a school at Ixworth, the whole of the poet's education was acquired at his mother's knee. At eleven years of age Robert became a "farmer's boy," entering the service of his uncle, Mr. Austen, of Sapiston, as a labouring lad. This event was of great importance to him, for, though like young Crabbe upon the quay at Slaughden, he soon proved himself unequal to the rough occupations of the place, yet, like Crabbe, he gained an insight into a special phase of life which he was thereby enabled to deal with, later on, in verse.

Robert proving too delicate for the work of the

farm, his mother communicated with his brother George, a shoemaker, then living in London; and arrangements were made for Robert to proceed to the Metropolis and learn his brother's trade. In June 1781, the journey was taken, Mrs. Bloomfield accompanying her son and handing him over to his brother's keeping. George Bloomfield, who met the pair at the inn, describes Robert as "a little boy not bigger than boys generally are at twelve years old," and "dressed just as he came from keeping sheep, pigs, etc.—his shoes filled full of stumps in the heels."

George Bloomfield was a journeyman, and at this time was associated with several others of his craft who worked together in a garret which they rented at No. 7, Pitcher's Court, Bell Alley, Coleman Street. Robert joined the party, and became at once a general help, and a general pupil. In a short time he became reader to the company, spelling out the speeches of Burke and Fox from the columns of the daily paper, borrowed from a public-house, when one day old. A dictionary, much the worse for wear, which his brother George bought at a bookstall for him for fourpence, helped him to the understanding of such words as were new to him, while attendance at lectures and sermons, by the best speakers within his reach, gave him some idea of style and pronunciation. The little party at Pitcher's Court, moreover, took in "The History of England," "The British Traveller," and a work on "Geography," in numbers, and George Bloomfield became a subscriber to the *London Magazine*. This latter work seems to have given Robert the *cacoethes scribendi* which was

responsible for his first attempts, for he was indebted to its poets' corner for the same impulse which Crabbe received from that of Martin's *Philosophical Magazine.* Bloomfield's first published verses, "The Milk Maid; or, the First of May," were written when sixteen years of age, and appeared in the poets' corner of the *London Magazine.* About 1784 he paid a visit to his old master, Mr. Austen, and renewed his love for the country and the farm. This interruption of his labours was due to the action of the London journeymen shoemakers, who threatened his brother for allowing him to work without indentures. After a stay of some two months in the country he returned to London, became apprentice to a Mr. Dudbridge, bought a violin and learned to play it, until in December 1790, he wrote his brother to say that he had "sold his fiddle, and got a wife," marrying Mary Ann Church, the daughter of a boatbuilder in Woolwich Dockyard. Too poor to furnish, he took his wife to furnished apartments for a time, ultimately taking a room on the first floor at 14, Bell Alley, the landlord giving him leave to sit and work in a light garret, "two pair of stairs higher." "In this garret," says his brother George, "amid six or seven other workmen, his active mind employed itself, composing 'The Farmer's Boy.'"

"The Farmer's Boy," when written out, was submitted to several persons for their opinion. At length it was shown to Mr. Capel Lofft, a Suffolk gentleman, who became the sincere friend and patron of the poet. The poem was published in March 1800, and was an immediate success. Some twenty-six thousand copies are said to have been

sold in less than three years. "Rural Tales" followed in 1802; "Good Tidings" in 1804; "Wild Flowers," 1806; "The Banks of the Wye," 1811; and "May-day with the Muses," 1822.

The immediate recognition of the poet, and the sale of his books, brought him many friends, and means, which, with prudence, might have rendered the remainder of his life comparatively easy; but his too great liberality to his relations, who were all poor, lessened his little store; while illness enfeebled his already weak constitution, and prevented him from working. A situation in the Seal Office, obtained for him by the Duke of Grafton, had to be given up on the score of ill health, and a bookselling venture turned out a failure. Rogers endeavoured to obtain a pension for him, but without success, and Southey took a keen interest in his welfare; but his last days were days of much suffering and poverty. They ended on the 19th of August, 1823, at Shefford, in Bedfordshire.

Bloomfield's poetry is characterised by a smoothness and ease of versification which came quite natural to him. He had an ear for music which guided him in the formation of his verse. If his vocabulary was not extensive it was quite large enough for the themes upon which he wrote; and his choice of words is often felicitous. One hears the tempest dying in the distance, as one reads—

> "Fled now the sullen murmurs of the north,"

and sees the pageant of the summer's pride in the succeeding line—

> "The splendid raiment of the spring peeps forth."

Bloomfield lacked passion and was wanting in

robustness and vigour, but he could be both tender and forcible at times.

His description of the little blind boy, in "May-day with the Muses," feeling his way by the trees and flowers in his path, in which the poet makes these dumb guides of his darkened way pity and play with him, is sweetly sympathetic:—

> "Fond to excess was he of all that grew;
> The many blossoms sprinkled o'er with dew,
> Across his path, as if in playful freak,
> Would dash his brow, and weep upon his cheek."

The story of the soldier's return, declared by Professor Wilson to be not one whit inferior to that of Burns, is full of happy touches and truthful delineations. The picture of the old soldier, entering the deserted house during the temporary absence of the loved ones he had left behind, and seating himself in his father's chair, marked with "the rough initials" of his name "cut forty years before," is in every way admirable. The striking of the old clock has more than mechanic force, and even the old almanacs that eddy from the wall become poetical. His "Rural Tales," too, are full of light humour and natural pathos.

But it is as a poet of Nature rather than of Humanity that Bloomfield claims recognition. His descriptions of natural scenery are both faithful and characteristic. His pictures of the farmer's boy engaged in various labours of the farm are those of one who draws direct from Nature, and who has himself experienced the life that he depicts. These show both minuteness of observation and fidelity of description, which entitle him to an honourable place among the earliest of modern worshippers

at the so long neglected shrine of Nature. Like John Clare later, he read Thomson's poems, and probably, like Clare, he drew inspiration from the laureate of "The Seasons"; but his "departure" was so far original as to give him a distinct place among the singers of his time.

Charles Lamb did not take kindly to Bloomfield's verse. Writing to Manning, in 1800, he says, referring to "The Farmer's Boy," published in the preceding March, "Don't you think the fellow who wrote it (who is a shoemaker) has a poor mind?" Poor is, of course, a comparative term, and it would be easy to justify its use in the present case by making invidious comparisons. But Bloomfield himself never pretended to compete with the giants by whose standards both friends and enemies elected to judge him. He never posed as anything but a "farmer's boy," who solaced himself amid squalid surroundings by the exercise of a mind which, among farmers' boys and shoemakers, might well be counted rich.

That poetic results must be judged upon their own merits, and apart from the circumstances under which they are produced, cannot be gainsaid, but while this is true in the calculation of comparative results, it is otherwise in estimating the poet himself. To do justice to Bloomfield and other "labour" poets a consideration of the poverty of their environment is necessary. Jeffrey rightly ridiculed the use of the term, "The Ayrshire Ploughman," which it was customary in his time to attach apologetically to the name of Burns. The poet never stood in any need of the apology, and, if he had, his circumstances were hardly such as would

have justified it. Burns was never poor in the sense in which it was only too well understood by Bloomfield, Clare, and others. He was born under healthy conditions; and probably in his younger days, never wanted for wholesome food and suitable clothing. At sixteen "he was remarkable for vigour and strength, being superior in rustic feats to all his competitors." With Bloomfield the case was different. Inheriting a low vitality, and dying the daily death of starved necessities in body, soul, and spirit, the wonder is not that his verse is often poor and thin, but that he ever wrote anything worthy of a second thought. The old simile, that compares the poetic nature to the plant that becomes stronger as it is pruned, holds good so long as the discipline is of the right kind, and the nature is robust enough to bear it. Hundreds of instances may be cited in which pain of body and anguish of soul have been the travail-throes of glorious birth; the discipline has been appropriate, and the strength has been equal to the day. But the pruning may be overdone, and the plant that will flourish under the pruning of its branches may succumb to the gnawing at its roots. The rack of physical suffering, and "the agony of bloody sweat," may and do develop the noblest characters and inspire the sublimest songs, but "chill penury" blights the atmosphere of aspiration, salts the soil of hope, saps the springs of vitality, and freezes the very fount of song.

ALFRED H. MILES.

THE FARMER'S BOY.

1800.

ROBERT BLOOMFIELD.

I.

OPENING LINES—INVOCATION.

O COME, blest Spirit! whatsoe'er thou art,
Thou rushing warmth that hover'st round my heart,
Sweet inmate, hail! thou source of sterling joy,
That poverty itself cannot destroy,
Be thou my Muse; and faithful still to me,
Retrace the paths of wild obscurity.
No deeds of arms my humble lines rehearse,
No Alpine wonders thunder through my verse,
The roaring cataract, the snow-topt hill,
Inspiring awe, till breath itself stands still:
Nature's sublimer scenes ne'er charm'd mine eyes,
Nor Science led me through the boundless skies;
From meaner objects far my raptures flow:
O point these raptures! bid my bosom glow!
And lead my soul to ecstasies of praise
For all the blessings of my infant days!
Bear me through regions where gay Fancy dwells;
But mould to Truth's fair form what Memory tells.

II.

SPRING.

Fled now the sullen murmurs of the North,
The splendid raiment of the Spring peeps forth;
Her universal green, and the clear sky,
Delight still more and more the gazing eye.
Wide o'er the fields, in rising moisture strong,
Shoots up the simple flower, or creeps along
The mellow'd soil; imbibing fairer hues,
Or sweets from frequent showers and evening dews;
That summon from the sheds the slumb'ring ploughs,
While health impregnates every breeze that blows.
No wheels support the diving, pointed, share;
No groaning ox is doom'd to labour there;
No helpmates teach the docile steed his road
(Alike unknown the ploughboy and the goad);
But, unassisted through each toilsome day,
With smiling brow the ploughman cleaves his way,
Draws his fresh parallels, and wid'ning still,
Treads slow the heavy dale, or climbs the hill:
Strong on the wing his busy followers play,
Where writhing earth-worms meet th' unwelcome day;
Till all is chang'd, and hill and level down
Assume a livery of sober brown:
Again disturb'd, when Giles with wearying strides
From ridge to ridge the ponderous harrow guides;
His heels deep sinking every step he goes,
Till dirt usurp the empire of his shoes.
Welcome green headland! firm beneath his feet;
Welcome the friendly bank's refreshing seat;
There, warm with toil, his panting horses browse
Their shelt'ring canopy of pendant boughs;

Till rest, delicious, chase each transient pain,
And new-born vigour swell in every vein.
Hour after hour, and day to day succeeds;
Till every clod and deep-drawn furrow spreads
To crumbling mould; a level surface clear,
And strew'd with corn to crown the rising year;
And o'er the whole Giles once transverse again,
In earth's moist bosom buries up the grain.
The work is done; no more to man is given;
The grateful farmer trusts the rest to Heaven.
Yet oft with anxious heart he looks around,
And marks the first green blade that breaks the ground;
In fancy sees his trembling oats uprun,
His tufted barley yellow with the sun;
Sees clouds propitious shed their timely store,
And all his harvest gather'd round his door.

III.

SUMMER.

Shot up from broad rank blades that droop below,
The nodding wheat-ear forms a graceful bow,
With milky kernels starting full, weigh'd down,
Ere yet the sun hath ting'd its head with brown;
Whilst thousands in a flock, for ever gay,
Loud chirping *sparrows* welcome on the day,
And from the mazes of the leafy thorn
Drop one by one upon the bending corn.
Giles with a pole assails their close retreats,
And round the grass-grown dewy border beats.
On either side completely overspread,
Here branches bend, there corn o'ertops his head.
Green covert, hail! for through the varying year
No hours so sweet, no scene to him so dear.

Here *Wisdom's* placid eye delighted sees
His frequent intervals of lonely ease,
And with one ray his infant soul inspires,
Just kindling there her never-dying fires,
Whence solitude derives peculiar charms,
And heaven-directed thought his bosom warms.
Just where the parting bough's light shadows play,
Scarce in the shade, nor in the scorching day,
Stretch'd on the turf he lies, a peopled bed,
Where swarming insects creep around his head.
The small dust-colour'd beetle climbs with pain
O'er the smooth plantain-leaf, a spacious plain!
Thence higher still, by countless steps convey'd,
He gains the summit of a shiv'ring blade,
And flirts his filmy wings, and looks around,
Exulting in his distance from the ground.
The tender speckled moth here dancing seen,
The vaulting grasshopper of glossy green,
And all prolific *Summer's* sporting train,
Their little lives by various pow'rs sustain.
But what can unassisted vision do?
What, but recoil where most it would pursue;
His patient gaze but finish with a sigh,
When musing waking speaks the *sky-lark* nigh!
Just starting from the corn she cheerly sings,
And trusts with conscious pride her downy wings;
Still louder breathes, and in the face of day
Mounts up, and calls on *Giles* to mark her way.
Close to his eyes his hat he instant bends,
And forms a friendly telescope, that lends
Just aid enough to dull the glaring light,
And place the wand'ring bird before his sight;
Yet oft beneath a cloud she sweeps along,
Lost for awhile, yet pours her varied song.

He views the spot, and as the cloud moves by,
Again she stretches up the clear blue sky;
Her form, her motion, undistinguish'd quite,
Save when she wheels direct from shade to light:
The flutt'ring songstress a mere speck became,
Like fancy's floating bubbles in a dream;
He sees her yet, but yielding to repose,
Unwittingly his jaded eyelids close.
Delicious sleep! From sleep who could forbear,
With no more guilt than *Giles*, and no more care?
Peace o'er his slumbers waves her guardian wing,
Nor conscience once disturbs him with a sting;
He wakes refresh'd from ev'ry trivial pain,
And takes his pole and brushes round again.

Its dark-green hue, its sicklier tints all fail,
And rip'ning harvest rustles in the gale.
A glorious sight, if glory dwells below,
Where Heaven's munificence makes all the show,
O'er every field and golden prospect found,
That glads the ploughman's Sunday morning's round,
When on some eminence he takes his stand,
To judge the smiling produce of the land.
Here Vanity slinks back, her head to hide:
What is there here to flatter human pride?
The tow'ring fabric, or the dome's loud roar,
And steadfast columns, may astonish more,
Where the charm'd gazer long delighted stays,
Yet trac'd but to the architect the praise;
Whilst here, the veriest clown that treads the sod,
Without one scruple, gives the praise to God;
And twofold joys possess his raptur'd mind,
From gratitude and admiration join'd.

Here, 'midst the boldest triumphs of her worth,
Nature herself invites the reapers forth;
Dares the keen sickle from its twelvemonth's rest,
And gives that ardour which in every breast
From infancy to age alike appears,
When the first sheaf its plumy top uprears.
No rake takes here what Heaven to all bestows—
Children of want, for you the bounty flows!
And every cottage from the plenteous store,
Receives a burden nightly at its door.

Hark! where the sweeping scythe now rips along:
Each sturdy Mower emulous and strong;
Whose writhing form meridian heat defies,
Bends o'er his work, and every sinew tries;
Prostrates the waving treasure at his feet,
But spares the rising clover, short and sweet.
Come, Health! come, Jollity! light-footed, come;
Here hold your revels, and make this your home.
Each heart awaits and hails you as its own;
Each moisten'd brow, that scorns to wear a frown:
Th' unpeopled dwelling mourns its tenants stray'd;
E'en the domestic laughing dairy-maid
Hies to the field, the general toil to share.
Meanwhile the Farmer quits his elbow-chair,
His cool brick-floor, his pitcher, and his ease,
And braves the sultry beams, and gladly sees
His gates thrown open, and his team abroad,
The ready group attendant on his word,
To turn the swarth, the quiv'ring load to rear,
Or ply the busy rake, the land to clear.
Summer's light garb itself now cumbrous grown,
Each his thin doublet in the shade throws down;

Where oft the mastiff sculks with half-shut eye,
And rouses at the stranger passing by;
Whilst unrestrain'd the social converse flows,
And every breast Love's pow'rful impulse knows,
And rival wits with more than rustic grace
Confess the presence of a pretty face.

For, lo! encircled there, the lovely Maid,
In youth's own bloom and native smiles array'd;
Her hat awry, divested of her gown,
Her creaking stays of leather, stout and brown;—
Invidious barrier! why art thou so high,
When the slight cov'ring of her neck slips by,
There half revealing to the eager sight
Her full, ripe bosom, exquisitely white?
In many a local tale of harmless mirth,
And many a jest of momentary birth,
She bears a part, and as she stops to speak,
Strokes back the ringlets from her glowing cheek.

* * * * *

Now, ere sweet Summer bids its long adieu,
And winds blow keen where late the blossom grew,
The bustling day and jovial night must come,
The long accustom'd feast of Harvest-home.
No blood-stain'd victory, in story bright,
Can give the philosophic mind delight;
No triumph please, while rage and death destroy:
Reflection sickens at the monstrous joy.
And where the joy, if rightly understood,
Like cheerful praise for universal good?
The soul nor check nor doubtful anguish knows,
But free and pure the grateful current flows.

Behold the sound oak table's massy frame
Bestride the kitchen floor! the careful dame

And gen'rous host invite their friends around,
While all that clear'd the crop, or till'd the ground,
Are guests by right of custom :—old and young ;
And many a neighbouring yeoman join the throng,
With artisans that lent their dex'trous aid,
When o'er each field the flaming sun-beams play'd.

Yet Plenty reigns, and from her boundless hoard,
Though not one jelly trembles on the board,
Supplies the feast with all that sense can crave ;
With all that made our great forefathers brave,
Ere the cloy'd palate countless flavours tried,
And cooks had Nature's judgment set aside.
With thanks to Heaven, and tales of rustic lore,
The mansion echoes when the banquet's o'er ;
A wider circle spreads, and smiles abound
As quick the frothing horn performs its round ;
Care's mortal foe ; that sprightly joys imparts
To cheer the frame and elevate their hearts.
Here, fresh and brown, the hazel's produce lies
In tempting heaps, and peals of laughter rise,
And crackling Music, with the frequent Song,
Unheeded bear the midnight hour along.

Here once a year Distinction low'rs its crest,
The master, servant, and the merry guest,
Are equal all ; and round the happy ring
The reaper's eyes exulting glances fling,
And, warm'd with gratitude, he quits his place,
With sun-burnt hands and ale-enliven'd face,
Refills the jug his honour'd host to tend,
To serve at once the master and the friend ;
Proud thus to meet his smiles, to share his tale,
His nuts, his conversation, and his ale.

MAY-DAY WITH THE MUSES.

1822.

ROBERT BLOOMFIELD.

I.

OPENING LINES.

FROM "THE INVITATION."

OH for the strength to paint my joy once more,
That joy I feel when Winter's reign is o'er;
When the dark despot lifts his hoary brow,
And seeks his polar realm's eternal snow.
Though black November's fogs oppress my brain,
Shake every nerve, and struggling fancy chain;
Though time creeps o'er me with his palsied hand,
And frost-like bids the stream of passion stand,
And through his dry teeth sends a shivering blast,
And points to more than fifty winters past,
Why should I droop with heartless, aimless eye?
Friends start around, and all my phantoms fly,
And Hope, upsoaring with expanded wing,
Unfolds a scroll, inscribed, "Remember Spring."
Stay, sweet enchantress, charmer of my days,
And glance thy rainbow-colours o'er my lays;
Be to poor Giles what thou hast ever been,
His heart's warm solace and his sovereign queen;
Dance with his rustics when the laugh runs high,
Live in the lover's heart, the maiden's eye;
Still be propitious when his feet shall stray
Beneath the bursting hawthorn buds of May;
Warm every thought, and brighten every hour,
And let him feel thy presence and thy power.

II.

THE SQUIRE'S FEAST.

THUS came the jovial day, no streaks of red
O'er the broad portal of the morn were spread,
But one high-sailing mist of dazzling white,
A screen of gossamer, a magic light,
Doom'd instantly, by simplest shepherd's ken,
To reign awhile, and be exhaled at ten.
O'er leaves, o'er blossoms, by his power restored,
Forth came the conquering sun and look'd abroad.
Millions of dew-drops fell, yet millions hung,
Like words of transport trembling on the tongue
Too strong for utterance. Thus the infant boy,
With rosebud cheeks, and features tuned to joy,
Weeps while he struggles with restraint or pain;
But change the scene, and make him laugh again,
His heart rekindles, and his cheek appears
A thousand times more lovely through his tears.
From the first glimpse of day, a busy scene
Was that high-swelling lawn, that destined green
Which shadowless expanded far and wide,
The mansion's ornament, the hamlet's pride;
To cheer, to order, to direct, contrive,
Even old Sir Ambrose had been up at five;
There his whole household labour'd in his view—
But light is labour where the task is new.
Some wheel'd the turf to build a grassy throne
Round a huge thorn that spread his boughs alone,
Rough-rined and bold, as master of the place;
Five generations of the Higham race
Had pluck'd his flowers, and still he held his sway,
Waved his white head, and felt the breath of May.
Some from the green-house ranged exotics round,
To bask in open day on English ground:

And 'midst them in a line of splendour drew
Long wreaths and garlands gather'd in the dew.
Some spread the snowy canvas, propp'd on high
O'er shelter'd tables with their whole supply;
Some swung the biting scythe with merry face,
And cropp'd the daisies for a dancing space;
Some roll'd the mouldy barrel in his might,
From prison'd darkness into cheerful light,
And fenced him round with cans; and others bore
The creaking hamper with its costly store,
Well cork'd, well flavour'd, and well tax'd, that came
From Lusitanian mountains, dear to fame,
Whence Gama steer'd, and led the conquering way
To eastern triumphs and the realms of day.
A thousand minor tasks fill'd every hour,
Till the sun gain'd the zenith of his power,
When every path was throng'd with old and young,
And many a sky-lark in his strength upsprung
To bid them welcome.—Not a face was there
But, for May-day at least, had banish'd care;
No cringing looks, no pauper tales to tell,
No timid glance—they knew their host too well—
Freedom was there, and joy in every eye:
Such scenes were England's boast in days gone by.
Beneath the thorn was good Sir Ambrose found,
His guests an ample crescent form'd around;
Nature's own carpet spread the space between,
Where blithe domestics plied in gold and green.
The venerable chaplain waved his wand,
And silence follow'd as he stretch'd his hand,
And with a trembling voice, and heart sincere,
Implored a blessing on the abundant cheer.
Down sat the mingling throng, and shared a feast
With hearty welcomes given, by love increased;

A patriarch family, a close-link'd band,
True to their rural chieftain, heart and hand:
The deep carouse can never boast the bliss,
The animation of a scene like this.
At length the damask cloths were whisk'd away,
Like fluttering sails upon a summer's day;
The hey-day of enjoyment found repose;
The worthy baronet majestic rose.
They view'd him, while his ale was filling round,
The monarch of his own paternal ground.
His cup was full, and where the blossoms bow'd
Over his head, Sir Ambrose spoke aloud,
Nor stopp'd a dainty form or phrase to cull—
His heart elated, like his cup, was full:—
"Full be your hopes, and rich the crops that fall;
Health to my neighbours, happiness to all."
Dull must that clown be, dull as winter's sleet,
Who would not instantly be on his feet:
An echoing health to mingling shouts give place,
"Sir Ambrose Higham and his noble race!"

III.

THE SOLDIER'S HOME.

My untried Muse shall no high tone assume,
Nor strut in arms—farewell my cap and plume!
Brief be my verse, a task within my power;
I tell my feelings in one happy hour:
But what an hour was that! when from the main
I reached this lovely valley once again!
A glorious harvest fill'd my eager sight,
Half shock'd, half waving in a flood of light;
On that poor cottage roof where I was born
The sun looked down as in life's early morn.
I gazed around, but not a soul appear'd;

I listen'd on the threshold, nothing heard;
I call'd my father thrice, but no one came;
It was not fear or grief that shook my frame,
But an o'erpowering sense of peace and home,
Of toils gone by, perhaps of joys to come.
The door invitingly stood open wide;
I shook my dust, and set my staff aside.
How sweet it was to breathe that cooler air,
And take possession of my father's chair!
Beneath my elbow, on the solid frame,
Appeared the rough initials of my name,
Cut forty years before! The same old clock
Struck the same bell, and gave my heart a shock
I never can forget. A short breeze sprung,
And while a sigh was trembling on my tongue,
Caught the old dangling almanacs behind,
And up they flew like banners in the wind;
Then gently, singly, down, down, down they went,
And told of twenty years that I had spent
Far from my native land. That instant came
A robin on the threshold; though so tame,
At first he looked distrustful, almost shy,
And cast on me his coal-black steadfast eye,
And seem'd to say (past friendship to renew)
"Ah ha! old worn-out soldier, is it you?"
Through the room ranged the imprison'd humble bee,
And bomb'd, and bounced, and struggled to be free;
Dashing against the panes with sullen roar,
That threw their diamond sunlight on the floor;
That floor, clean sanded, where my fancy stray'd,
O'er undulating waves the broom had made,
Reminding me of those of hideous forms
That met us as we pass'd the Cape of Storms,
Where high and loud they break, and peace comes never;

They roll and foam, and roll and foam for ever.
But *here* was peace, that peace which home can yield;
The grasshopper, the partridge in the field,
And ticking clock, were all at once become
The substitutes for clarion, fife, and drum.
While thus I mused, still gazing, gazing still
On beds of moss that spread the window sill,
I deem'd no moss my eyes had ever seen
Had been so lovely, brilliant, fresh, and green,
And guess'd some infant hand had placed it there,
And prized its hue, so exquisite, so rare.
Feelings on feelings mingling, doubling rose;
My heart felt everything but calm repose;
I could not reckon minutes, hours, nor years,
But rose at once, and bursted into tears;
Then, like a fool, confused, sat down again,
And thought upon the past with shame and pain.
I raved at war and all its horrid cost,
And glory's quagmire, where the brave are lost.
On carnage, fire, and plunder long I mused,
And cursed the murdering weapons I had used.
Two shadows then I saw, two voices heard,
One bespoke age, and one a child's appear'd.
In stepp'd my father with convulsive start,
And in an instant clasp'd me to his heart.
Close by him stood a little blue-eyed maid,
And, stooping to the child, the old man said,
"Come hither, Nancy, kiss me once again,
This is your uncle Charles, come home from Spain."
The child approach'd, and with her fingers light,
Stroked my old eyes, almost deprived of sight.—
But why thus spin my tale—thus tedious be?
Happy old Soldier! what's the world to me!

James Hogg.

1770—1835.

James Hogg, "the Ettrick Shepherd," was born in a cottage at Ettrickhall, Selkirkshire. The exact date of his birth is unknown; he was baptized, however, on the 9th December, 1770. He was the son of Robert Hogg, a farmer, and of Margaret Laidlaw. Before he was six years old his father had failed, and the family had been turned out of doors. He was only six months at school; at the age of seven he was employed as a herd-boy, and at sixteen he was a shepherd on the lands of Willenslee. In the intervals of work he read all the books he could obtain; from his mother he acquired a rich stock of songs and ballads and legendary border lore. Between 1790 and 1800 he served as a shepherd at Blackhouse, a farm on the Douglas Burn, in Yarrow. It was not, he says, until his twenty-sixth year that he began to write verses, and his first work, by his own confession, was merely a tissue of lines and phrases borrowed from Dryden's *Virgil* and Harvey's metrical *Life of Bruce*. He soon, however, discovered that he had the lyrical gift, and from his songs he became known throughout the Forest as "Jamie the Poeter." In 1800 he printed the following piece, "Donald McDonald," a song of defiance to the "Corsican callan," who was then threatening the invasion of England:—

My name it is Donald McDonald,
I leeve in the Heelands sae grand;
I hae follow'd our banner, and will do,
Wherever my Master has land.
When rankit amang the blue bonnets,
Nae danger can fear me ava;
I ken that my brethren around me
Are either to conquer or fa':
Brogues an' brochin an' a',
Brochin an' brogues an' a';
An' is nae her very weel aff,
Wi' her brogues an' brochin an' a'?

What though we befriendit young Charlie?—
To tell it I dinna think shame;
Poor lad! he came to us but barely,
An' reckon'd our mountains his hame.
'Twas true that our reason forbade us;
But tenderness carried the day;
Had Geordie come friendless amang us,
Wi' him we had a' gane away.
Sword an' buckler an' a',
Buckler an' sword an' a';
Now for George we'll encounter the devil,
Wi' sword an' buckler an' a'!

An' O, I wad eagerly press him
The keys o' the East to retain;
For should he gie up the possession,
We'll soon hae to force them again.
Than yield up an inch wi' dishonour,
Though it were my finishing blow,
He aye may depend on McDonald,
Wi' his Heelanders a' in a row:
Knees an' elbows an' a',
Elbows an' knees an' a';
Depend upon Donald McDonald,
His knees an' elbows an' a'!

Wad Bonaparte land at Fort-William,
Auld Europe nae langer should grane;
I laugh when I think how we'd gall him
Wi' bullet, wi' steel, an' wi' stane;

Wi' rocks o' the Nevis and Garny
We'd rattle him off frae our shore,
Or lull him asleep in a cairny,
An' sing him—"Lochaber no more!"
Stanes an' bullets an' a',
Bullets an' stanes an' a';
We'll finish the Corsican callan
Wi' stanes an' bullets an' a'!

For the Gordon is good in a hurry,
An' Campbell is steel to the bane,
An' Grant, an' McKenzie, an' Murray,
An' Cameron will hurkle to nane;
The Stuart is sturdy an' loyal;
An' sae is McLeod an' McKay;
An' I, their gude-brither McDonald,
Shall ne'er be the last in the fray!
Brogues an' brochin an' a',
Brochin an' brogues an' a';
An' up wi' the bonny blue bonnet,
The kilt an' the feather an' a'!

"Donald McDonald" holds the first place in a volume of songs published by Hogg, in 1831, in which the poet says: "I place this song first, not on account of any intrinsic merit that it possesses—for there it ranks rather low—but merely because it was my first song, and exceedingly popular when it first appeared." . . . "It is set to the old air 'Woo'd and Married an' a'.'"

A year later, having gone to sell sheep in Edinburgh, he there caused to be published one thousand copies of a volume of songs and pastorals, which deservedly fell dead. The pieces, he truly remarked, "were sad stuff, though I judged them to be exceedingly good." For one or two years he managed his father's farm at Blackhouse, but having to quit the holding on the expiring of the lease in 1803, he resolved to become a sheep-farmer

in the Hebrides, and wrote a "Farewell to Ettrick." About this time, fortunately, he made the acquaintance of Sir Walter Scott, then Mr. Scott, Sheriff of Selkirkshire, on whose advice Constable published Hogg's "Mountain Bard," and a treatise, "Hogg on Sheep," for which two works their author received the sum of £300. The money was lost in unprofitable farming, and after vainly seeking employment as a shepherd in Ettrick, Hogg bade farewell to the Forest and endeavoured to earn a living by his pen in Edinburgh. He was for some time very unsuccessful. His "Forest Minstrel," a volume of poems, made no impression on the public, and *The Spy*, a weekly paper which he started, failed after running for a few months. "The Queen's Wake," however, appeared in 1813, and established the reputation of its author. He became familiar with Wilson, Lockhart, and other men of letters, and was one of the earliest contributors to *Blackwood's Magazine*. He remained, however, in very hard circumstances until he was relieved by the Duke of Buccleuch, who made him tenant, at a nominal rent, of the small farm of Mossend or Altrive, on the braes of Yarrow. All might have gone well with him had he been content with his farm and his poetry. But he lost money by renting other land, and remained in pecuniary difficulties to the end of his days. In 1820 he married Margaret Philipps, the daughter of an Annandale farmer. The marriage was a happy one, though his wife was his junior by twenty years. He now produced a number of prose tales, the most important being "The Brownie of Bodsbeck," "The Siege of Roxburgh," and "The Confessions of a Fanatic." It is uncertain whether or

not Lockhart collaborated in writing the last-named story—the most powerful of all Hogg's efforts in prose fiction. In 1834 he visited London, where he remained for three months, and where his talents and eccentricities secured him an entrance to the chief literary circles. But ill-luck dogged him to the end; he was repeatedly disappointed in his dealings with publishers, and he never received adequate payment for his work. At last his health broke down, and he died from an affection of the liver on November 21st, 1835. He was buried in Ettrick churchyard.

Though the Shepherd's popularity among his countrymen has been wide and promises to be enduring, his work has received less attention than it merits at the hands of the literary critic. Much that he wrote is of little or no worth; his long ambitious tales in verse, "Queen Hynde," "Madoc of the Moor," and "The Pilgrims of the Sun," have fallen into the limbo of the unread, and for them there is no resurrection. His defects are glaring; he is often affected and over-ambitious; he uses words with a pedantic ineptitude, a comic infelicity which it would be hard to parallel in the works of any writer of corresponding genius. Compare him, not to Burns or Scott—which would be grotesquely unjust—but to such a minor singer as Tannahill, and you find that the verses of the west-country weaver have a depth of feeling, a glow and tremor of lyric passion, which move you as you are never moved by aught that Hogg has written. But he was a most musical song-writer and a master of the ballad; he had a gift of humour both playful and grimly fantastic; and in one sphere of work he has hardly been excelled. When he described

himself to Scott as the King of the Mountain and Fairy School of Poetry, he spoke with much less exaggeration than was his wont when discussing his own verses. "Kilmeny" is one of the loveliest poems that ever carried a reader into enchanted land. The piece, to use a phrase of Matthew Arnold's, is drenched in magic. The impression of glamour, of a misty, rainbow-coloured world of fantasy, could not be more delicately conveyed; the lines, with their dreamy cadences, haunt the ear like a tune blown upon the horns of elf-land. To turn to his lyrics and ballads—"When the Kye come Hame" will live with Burns' "O' a' the Airts the Wind can blaw;" his "Skylark" is as graceful as it is spontaneous; and "The Stuarts of Appin" may rank with all but the very best of the Jacobite songs. There are few fierier battle-lays than "Lock the Door, Lariston;" and an arch, light-hearted tenderness, not unworthy of Burns, plays through the lines of "My love she's but a Lassie yet." "The Witch of Fife" is a triumph in the grotesque; and in "Earl Walter" and "Jock Johnstone" we have two ballads as hearty, direct, and rousing as are to be met with outside "The Minstrelsy of the Border." Wild and graceful fancy, airy music, humour alternately weird and frolic, the gift of narrative in verse, and a faculty not greatly inferior to Scott's for the writing of a stirring battle-song—all of these were the Ettrick Shepherd's, and they far more than atone for defects, often ludicrous and jarring, but assuredly pardonable when we consider the early training and the after career of the poet.

WALTER WHYTE.

SONGS.

JAMES HOGG.

I.—LOCK THE DOOR, LARISTON.

"LOCK the door, Lariston, lion of Liddisdale;
Lock the door, Lariston, Lowther comes on;
The Armstrongs are flying,
The widows are crying,
The Castletown's burning, and Oliver's gone!

Lock the door, Lariston,—high on the weather-gleam
See how the Saxon plumes bob on the sky,—
Yeoman and carbinier,
Bilman and halberdier;
Fierce is the foray, and far is the cry!

Bewcastle brandishes high his broad scimitar;
Ridley is riding his fleet-footed grey;
Hidley and Howard there,
Wandale and Windermere,—
Lock the door, Lariston; hold them at bay.

Why dost thou smile, noble Elliot of Lariston?
Why does the joy-candle gleam in thine eye?
Thou bold Border ranger,
Beware of thy danger;—
Thy foes are relentless, determined, and nigh."

Jock Elliot raised up his steel bonnet and lookit,
His hand grasp'd the sword with a nervous embrace;
"Ah, welcome, brave foemen,
On earth there are no men
More gallant to meet in the foray or chase!

Little know you of the hearts I have hidden here;
Little know you of our moss-troopers' might—
Lindhope and Sorbie true,
Sundhope and Milburn too,
Gentle in manner, but lions in fight!

I've Mangerton, Ogilvie, Raeburn and Netherbie,
Old Sim of Whitram, and all his array;
Come all Northumberland,
Teesdale and Cumberland,
Here at the Breaken tower end shall the fray."

Scowl'd the broad sun o'er the links of green Liddisdale,
Red as the beacon-light tipp'd he the wold;
Many a bold martial eye,
Mirror'd that morning sky,
Never more oped on his orbit of gold!

Shrill was the bugle's note! dreadful the warriors' shout!
Lances and halberds in splinters were borne;
Helmet and hauberk then
Braved the claymore in vain,
Buckler and armlet in shivers were shorn.

See how they wane—the proud files of the Windermere!
Howard—ah! woe to thy hopes of the day!
Hear the wide welkin rend,
While the Scots' shouts ascend,
"Elliot of Lariston, Elliot for aye!"

II.—THE STUARTS OF APPIN.

I SING of a land that was famous of yore,
The land of Green Appin, the ward of the flood,
Where every grey cairn that broods o'er the shore,
Marks grave of the royal, the valiant, or good.
The land where the strains of grey Ossian were framed,—
The land of fair Selma, the reign of Fingal,—
And late of a race, that with tears must be named,
The noble Clan Stuart, the bravest of all.
Oh-hon, an Righ! and the Stuarts of Appin!
The gallant, devoted, old Stuarts of Appin—
Their glory is o'er, for the clan is no more,
And the Sassenach sings on the hills of green Appin.

In spite of the Campbells, their might and renown,
And all the proud files of Glenorchy and Lorn,
While one of the Stuarts held claim on the crown,
His banner full boldly by Appin was borne.
And ne'er fell the Campbells in check or trepan,
In all their Whig efforts their power to renew,
But still on the Stuarts of Appin they ran,
To wreak their proud wrath on the brave and the few.

In the year of the Graham, while in oceans of blood,
The fields of the Campbells were gallantly flowing,—
It was then that the Stuarts the foremost still stood,
And paid back a share of the debt they were owing.
O, proud Inverlochy! O, day of renown!
Since first the sun rose o'er the peaks of Cruachin,
Was ne'er such an host by such valour o'erthrown,
Was ne'er such a day for the Stuarts of Appin!

And ne'er for the crown of the Stuarts was fought
One battle on vale, or on mountain deer-trodden,
But dearly to Appin the glory was bought,
And dearest of all on the field of Culloden!
Lament, O, Glen-Creran, Glen-Duror, Ardshiel,
High offspring of heroes who conquer'd were never,
For the deeds of your fathers no bard shall reveal,
And the bold Clan of Stuart must perish for ever!

Clan-Chattan is broken, the Seaforth bends low,
The sun of Clan-Ranald is sinking in labour;
Glencoe, and Clan Donnachie, where are they now?
And where is bold Keppoch, the lord of Lochaber?
All gone with the house they supported!—laid low,
While dogs of the south their bold life-blood were lappin
Trod down by a proud and a merciless foe—
The brave are all gone with the Stuarts of Appin!

They are gone! they are gone! the redoubted, the brave
The sea-breezes lone o'er their relics are sighing;
Dark weeds of oblivion shroud many a grave,
Where the unconquer'd foes of the Campbells are lyin
But, long as the grey hairs wave over this brow,
And earthly emotions my spirit are wrapping,
My old heart with tides of regret shall o'erflow,
And bleed for the fall of the Stuarts of Appin.
Oh-hon, an Righ! and the Stuarts of Appin!
The gallant, devoted, old Stuarts of Appin!
Their glory is o'er, for their star is no more,
And the green grass waves over the heroes of Appi

III.—WHEN THE KYE COME HAME.

COME all ye jolly shepherds
That whistle through the glen,
I'll tell ye of a secret
That courtiers dinna ken:
What is the greatest bliss
That the tongue o' man can name?
'Tis to woo a bonny lassie
When the kye come hame.
When the kye come hame,
When the kye come hame,
'Tween the gloaming an' the mirk,
When the kye come hame.

'Tis not beneath the coronet,
Nor canopy of state,
'Tis not on couch of velvet,
Nor arbour of the great—
'Tis beneath the spreading birk,
In the glen without the name,
Wi' a bonny, bonny lassie,
When the kye come hame.

There the blackbird bigs his nest
For the mate he lo'es to see,
And on the topmost bough,
O, a happy bird is he;
Where he pours his melting ditty,
And love is a' the theme,
And he'll woo his bonny lassie
When the kye come hame.

When the blewart bears a pearl,
And the daisy turns a pea,
And the bonny lucken gowan
Has fauldit up her e'e,
Then the laverock frae the blue lift
Doops down, an' thinks nae shame
To woo his bonny lassie
When the kye come hame.

See yonder pawkie shepherd,
That lingers on the hill,
His ewes are in the fauld,
An' his lambs are lying still;
Yet he downa gang to bed,
For his heart is in a flame,
To meet his bonny lassie
When the kye come hame.

When the little wee bit heart
Rises high in the breast,
An' the little wee bit starn
Rises red in the east,
O, there's a joy sae dear
That the heart can hardly frame,
Wi' a bonny, bonny lassie,
When the kye come hame.

Then since all nature joins
In this love without alloy,
O, wha wad prove a traitor
To Nature's dearest joy?
Or wha wad choose a crown,
Wi' its perils and its fame,
And *miss* his bonny lassie
When the kye come hame?

IV.—MY LOVE SHE'S BUT A LASSIE YET.

MY love she's but a lassie yet,
A lightsome lovely lassie yet;
It scarce wad do
To sit an' woo
Down by the stream sae glassy yet.

But there's a braw time coming yet,
When we may gang a roaming yet;
An' hint wi' glee
O' joys to be,
When fa's the modest gloaming yet.

She's neither proud nor saucy yet,
She's neither plump nor gaucy yet;
But just a jinking,
Bonny blinking,
Hilty-skilty lassie yet.

But O her artless smile's mair sweet
Than hinny or than marmalete;
An' right or wrang,
Ere it be lang,
I'll bring her to a parley yet.

I'm jealous o' what blesses her,
The very breeze that kisses her,
The flowery beds
On which she treads,
Though wae for ane that misses her.

Then O to meet my lassie yet,
Up in yon glen sae grassy yet;
For all I see
Are nought to me,
Save her that's but a lassie yet.

V.—THE SKYLARK.

BIRD of the wilderness,
Blythesome and cumberless,
Sweet be thy matin o'er moorland and lea!
Emblem of happiness,
Blest is thy dwelling-place—
O to abide in the desert with thee!

Wild is thy lay and loud,
Far in the downy cloud,
Love gives it energy, love gave it birth.
Where, on thy dewy wing,
Where art thou journeying?
Thy lay is in heaven, thy love is on earth.

O'er fell and fountain sheen,
O'er moor and mountain green,
O'er the red streamer that heralds the day,
Over the cloudlet dim,
Over the rainbow's rim,
Musical cherub, soar, singing, away!

Then, when the gloaming comes
Low in the heather blooms
Sweet will thy welcome and bed of love be!
Emblem of happiness,
Blest is thy dwelling-place—
O to abide in the desert with thee!

THE QUEEN'S WAKE.

1813.

JAMES HOGG.

I.

THE FATE OF MACGREGOR.

THE ELEVENTH BARD'S SONG.

"MACGREGOR, Macgregor, remember our foemen;
The moon rises broad from the brow of Ben-Lomond;
The clans are impatient, and chide thy delay;
Arise! let us bound to Glen-Lyon away."—

Stern scowled the Macgregor, then silent and sullen,
He turned his red eye to the braes of Strathfillan:
"Go, Malcolm, to sleep, let the clans be dismissed;
The Campbells this night for Macgregor must rest."

"Macgregor, Macgregor, our scouts have been flying,
Three days, round the hills of M'Nab and Glen-Lyon;
Of riding and running such tidings they bear,
We must meet them at home, else they'll quickly be here."

"The Campbell may come, as his promises bind him,
And haughty M'Nab, with his giants behind him;
This night I am bound to relinquish the fray,
And do what it freezes my vitals to say.
Forgive me, dear brother, this horror of mind;
Thou know'st in the strife I was never behind,
Nor ever receded a foot from the van,
Or blenched at the ire or the prowess of man.

But I've sworn by the cross, by my God, and my all!—
An oath which I cannot and dare not recall—
Ere the shadows of midnight fall east from the pile,
To meet with a spirit this night in Glen-Gyle.

Last night, in my chamber, all thoughtful and lone,
I called to remembrance some deeds I had done,
When entered a lady, with visage so wan,
And looks, such as never were fastened on man.
I knew her, oh, brother! I knew her too well!—
Of that once fair dame such a tale I could tell,
As would thrill thy bold heart: but how long she remained,
So racked was my spirit, my bosom so pained,
I knew not—but ages seemed short to the while.
Though proffer the Highlands, nay, all the green isle,
With length of existence no man can enjoy,
The same to endure, the dread proffer I'd fly!
The thrice-threatened pangs of last night to forego,
Macgregor would dive to the mansions below.
Despairing and mad, to futurity blind,
The present to shun, and some respite to find—
I swore, ere the shadow fell east from the pile,
To meet her alone by the brook of Glen-Gyle.

She told me, and turned my chilled heart to a stone,
The glory and name of Macgregor were gone:
That the pine, which for ages had shed a bright halo
Afar on the mountains of Highland Glen-Falo,
Should wither and fall ere the turn of yon moon,
Smit through by the canker of hated Colquhoun:
That a feast on Macgregors each day should be common,
For years, to the eagles of Lennox and Lomond.

A parting embrace, in one moment, she gave:
Her breath was a furnace, her bosom the grave!

Then flitting elusive, she said, with a frown,
'The mighty Macgregor shall yet be my own!'"

"Macgregor, thy fancies are wild as the wind;
The dreams of the night have disordered thy mind.
Come, buckle thy panoply,—march to the field—
See, brother, how hacked are thy helmet and shield!
Ay, that was M'Nab, in the height of his pride,
When the lions of Dochart stood firm by his side.
This night the proud chief his presumption shall rue;
Rise, brother, these chinks in his heart-blood will glue:
Thy fantasies frightful shall flit on the wing,
When loud with thy bugle Glen-Lyon shall ring."

Like glimpse of the moon through the storm of the night
Macgregor's red eye shed one sparkle of light:
It faded—it darkened—he shuddered—he sighed—
"No! not for the universe!" low he replied.

Away went Macgregor, but went not alone;
To watch the dread rendezvous, Malcolm has gone.
They oared the broad Lomond, so still and serene,
And deep in her bosom, how awful the scene!
O'er mountains inverted the blue waters curled,
And rocked them on skies of a far nether world.

All silent they went, for the time was approaching;
The moon the blue zenith already was touching;
No foot was abroad on the forest or hill,
No sound but the lullaby sung by the rill:
Young Malcolm at distance couched, trembling the while,
Macgregor stood lone by the brook of Glen-Gyle.

Few minutes had passed, ere they spied on the stream
A skiff sailing light, where a lady did seem;
Her sail was the web of the gossamer's loom,
The glow-worm her wakelight, the rainbow her boom;

A dim rayless beam was her prow and her mast,
Like wold-fire at midnight, that glares on the waste.
Though rough was the river with rock and cascade,
No torrent, no rock, her velocity stayed;
She wimpled the water to weather and lee,
And heaved as if borne on the waves of the sea.
Mute Nature was roused in the bounds of the glen;
The wild deer of Gairtney abandon'd his den—
Fled panting away, over river and isle,
Nor once turned his eye to the brook of Glen-Gyle.

The fox fled in terror; the eagle awoke,
As slumb'ring he dozed in the shelve of the rock;
Astonished, to hide in the moonbeam he flew,
And screwed the night-heaven till lost in the blue.

Young Malcolm beheld the pale lady approach,
The chieftain salute her, and shrink from her touch.
He saw the Macgregor kneel down on the plain,
As begging for something he could not obtain;
She raised him indignant, derided his stay,
Then bore him on board, set her sail, and away.

Though fast the red bark down the river did glide,
Yet faster ran Malcolm adown by its side:
"Macgregor! Macgregor!" he bitterly cried;
"Macgregor! Macgregor!" the echoes replied.
He struck at the lady, but, strange though it seem,
His sword only fell on the rocks and the stream;
But the groans from the boat, that ascended amain,
Were groans from a bosom in horror and pain.
They reach'd the dark lake, and bore lightly away
—Macgregor is vanished for ever and aye!

II.

EARL WALTER.

THE TWELFTH BARD'S SONG.

"WHAT makes Earl Walter pace the wood
In the wan light of the moon?
Why altered is Earl Walter's mood
So strangely and so soon?"—

"It is his lot to fight a knight
Whom man could never tame,
To-morrow, in his Sovereign's sight,
Or bear perpetual shame."—

"Go warn the Clyde, go warn the Ayr,
Go warn them suddenly,
If none will fight for Earl Walter,
Some one may fight for me."—

"Now hold your tongue, my daughter dear,
Now hold your tongue for shame,
For never shall my son Walter
Disgrace his father's name.

"Shall ladies tell, and minstrels sing,
How lord of Scottish blood
By proxy fought before his king?
No, never! by the rood!"—

Earl Walter rose ere it was day,
For battle made him boun';
Earl Walter mounted his bonny gray,
And rode to Stirling town.

Old Hamilton from the tower came down,
"Go saddle a steed for me,
And I'll away to Stirling town
This deadly bout to see.

"Mine eye is dim, my locks are gray,
My cheek is furred and wan;
Ah, me! but I have seen the day
I feared not single man!

"Bring me my steed," said Hamilton;
"Darcie his vaunts may rue;
Whoever slays my only son
Must fight the father too.

"Whoever fights my noble son,
May foin the best he can;
Whoever braves Wat Hamilton,
Shall know he braves a man."—

And there was riding in belt and brand,
And running o'er holt and lea;
For all the lords of fair Scotland
Came there the fight to see.

And squire, and groom, and baron bold,
Trooping in thousands came,
And many a hind and warrior old
And many a lovely dame.

When good Earl Walter rode the ring
Upon his mettled gray,
There was none so ready as our good king
To bid that Earl good day.

For one so gallant and so young,
Oh, many a heart beat high;
And no fair eye in all the throng
Nor rosy cheek, was dry.

But up then spoke the king's daughter,
Fair Margaret was her name,—
"If we should lose brave Earl Walter,
My sire is sore to blame.

"Forbid the fight, my liege, I pray,
Upon my bended knee."—
"Daughter, I'm loth to say you nay
It cannot, must not be."—

"Proclaim it round," the princess cried,
"Proclaim it suddenly;
If none will fight for Earl Walter,
Some one may fight for me.

"In Douglas-dale I have a tower,
With many a holm and hill,
I'll give them all, and ten times more,
To him will Darcie kill."—

But up then spoke old Hamilton,
And doffed his bonnet blue;
In his sunk eye the tear-drop shone,
And his gray locks o'er it flew:—

"Cease, cease, thou lovely royal maid,
Small cause hast thou for pain;
Wat Hamilton shall have no aid
'Gainst lord of France or Spain.

"I love my boy; but should he fly,
Or other for him fight,
Heaven grant that first his parent's eye
May set in endless night!"—

Young Margaret blushed, her weeping stay'd
And quietly looked on:
Now Margaret was the fairest maid
On whom the daylight shone.

Her eye was like the star of love
That blinks across the evening dun;
The locks that waved that eye above,
Like light clouds curling round the sun.

When Darcie entered in the ring,
A shudder round the circle flew;
Like men who from a serpent spring,
They startled at the view.

His look so fierce, his crest so high,
His belts and bands of gold,
And the glances of his charger's eye
Were dreadful to behold.

But when he saw Earl Walter's face,
So rosy and so young,
He frowned, and sneered with haughty grace,
And round disdainful flung.

"What! dost thou turn my skill to sport,
And break thy jests on me?
Think'st thou I sought the Scottish court
To play with boys like thee?

"Fond youth, go home and learn to ride;
For pity, get thee gone;
Tilt with the girls and boys of Clyde,
And boast of what thou'st done.

"If Darcie's spear but touch thy breast,
It flies thy body through;
If Darcie's sword come o'er thy crest,
It cleaves thy head in two."

"I came not here to vaunt, Darcie;
I came not here to scold;
It ill befits a knight like thee
Such proud discourse to hold.

"To-morrow boast, amid the throng,
Of deeds which thou hast done;
To-day restrain thy saucy tongue;
Rude blusterer, come on!"

Rip went the spurs in either steed,
To different posts they sprung;
Quivered each spear o'er charger's head;
Forward each warrior hung.

The horn blew once—the horn blew twice—
Oh, many a heart beat high!
'Twas silence all!—the horn blew thrice—
Dazzled was every eye.

Hast thou not seen, from heaven, in ire
The eagle swift descend?
Hast thou not seen the sheeted fire
The lowering darkness rend?

Not faster glides the eagle gray
Adown the yielding wind;
Not faster bears the bolt away
Leaving the storm behind;

Than flew the warriors on their way,
With full suspended breath;—
Than flew the warriors on their way
Across the field of death.

So fierce the shock, so loud the clang,
The gleams of fire were seen;
The rocks and towers of Stirling rang,
And the red blood fell between.

Earl Walter's gray was borne aside,
Lord Darcie's black held on.
"Oh! ever alack," fair Margaret cried,
"The brave Earl Walter's gone!"
"Oh! ever alack," the king replied,
"That ever the deed was done!"

Earl Walter's broken corslet doffed,
He turned with lightened eye;
His glancing spear he raised aloft,
And seemed to threat the sky.

Lord Darcie's spear, aim'd at his breast,
He parried dext'rously;
Then caught him rudely by the wrist,
Saying, "Warrior, come with me!"

Lord Darcie drew, Lord Darcie threw,
But threw and drew in vain;
Lord Darcie drew, Lord Darcie threw,
And spurred his black amain.

Down came Lord Darcie—casque and brand
Loud rattled on the clay;
Down came Earl Walter—hand in hand,
And head to head, they lay.

Lord Darcie's steed turned to his lord,
And, trembling, stood behind;
But off Earl Walter's dapple scoured
Far fleeter than the wind;
Nor stop, nor stay, nor gate, nor ford,
Could make her look behind.

O'er holt, o'er hill, o'er slope and slack,
She sought her native stall;
She liked not Darcie's doughty black,
Nor Darcie's spear at all.

"Even go thy ways," Earl Walter cried,
"Since better may not be;
I'll trust my life with weapon tried,
But never again with thee.

"Rise up, Lord Darcie, sey thy brand,
And fling thy mail away;
For foot to foot, and hand to hand,
We'll now decide the day."—

So said, so done; their helms they flung,
Their doublets linked and sheen;
And hauberk, armlet, cuirass, rung
Promiscuous on the green.

"Now, Darcie! now, thy dreaded name,
That oft has chilled a foe,
Thy hard-earned honours, and thy fame,
Depend on every blow.

"Sharp be thine eye, and firm thy hand;
Thy heart unmoved remain;
For never was the Scottish brand
Upreared, and reared in vain."—

"Now do thy best, young Hamilton,
Rewarded shalt thou be;
Thy king, thy country, and thy kin,
All, all depend on thee!

"Thy father's heart yearns for his son,
The ladies' cheeks grow wan;
Wat Hamilton! Wat Hamilton!
Now prove thyself a man!"

What makes Lord Darcie shift and dance
So fast around the plain?
What makes Lord Darcie strike and lance,
As passion fired his brain?

"Lay on, lay on," said Hamilton;
"Thou bear'st thee boist'rously;
If thou shouldst pelt till day be done,
Thy weapon I defy."

What makes Lord Darcie shift and wear
So fast around the plain?
Why are Lord Darcie's hollands fair
All strip'd with crimson grain?—

The first blow that Earl Walter made,
He clove his bearded chin.
"Beshrew thy heart," Lord Darcie said,
"Ye sharply do begin!"

The next blow that Earl Walter made,
Quite through the gare it ran.
"Now by my faith," Lord Darcie said,
"That's stricken like a man."

The third blow that Earl Walter made,
It pierced his lordly side.
"Now, by my troth," Lord Darcie said,
"Thy marks are ill to bide."

Lord Darcie's sword he forced a-hight,
And tripp'd him on the plain.
"Oh, ever alack," then cried the knight,
"I ne'er shall rise again!"

When good Earl Walter saw he grew
So pale, and lay so low,
Away his brace of swords he threw,
And raised his fainting foe.

Then rang the lists with shouts of joy,
Loud and more loud they grew;
And many a bonnet to the sky,
And many a coif, they threw.

The tear stood in the father's eye,—
He wiped his aged brow,—
"Give me thy hand, my gallant boy,
I knew thee not till now.

"My liege, my king, this is my son
Whom I present to thee;
Nor would I change Wat Hamilton
For all the lads I see!"—

"Welcome, my friend and warrior old,
This gallant son of thine
Is much too good for baron bold,
He must be son of mine!

"For he shall wed my daughter dear,
The flower of fair Scotland;
The badge of honour he shall wear,
And sit at my right hand.

"And he shall have the lands of Kyle,
And royal bounds of Clyde;
And he shall have all Arran's Isle
To dower his royal bride."

The princess smiled, and sore was flushed,
O, but her heart was fain;
And aye her cheek of beauty blushed
Like rose-bud in the rain.

From this the Hamiltons of Clyde
Their royal lineage draw;
And thus was won the fairest bride
That Scotland ever saw!

III.

KILMENY.

THE THIRTEENTH BARD'S SONG.

BONNIE Kilmeny gaed up the glen;
But it wasna to meet Duneira's men,
Nor the rosy monk of the isle to see,
For Kilmeny was pure as pure could be.
It was only to hear the Yorlin sing,
And pu' the cress-flower round the spring;
The scarlet hypp and the hind-berrye,
And the nut that hung frae the hazel tree;
For Kilmeny was pure as pure could be.
But lang may her minny look o'er the wa';
And lang may she seek i' the green-wood shaw;
Lang the laird o' Duneira blame,
And lang, lang greet or Kilmeny come hame!

When many a day had come and fled,
When grief grew calm, and hope was dead,
When mass for Kilmeny's soul had been sung,
When the bedesmen had prayed, and the dead-bell rung,
Late, late in the gloamin' when all was still,
When the fringe was red on the westlin hill,
The wood was sere, the moon i' the wane,
The reek o' the cot hung over the plain,
Like a little wee cloud in the world its lane;
When the ingle lowed wi' an eiry leme—
Late, late in the gloamin' Kilmeny came hame!
"Kilmeny, Kilmeny, where have you been?
Lang hae we sought baith holt and den;
By linn, by ford, and green-wood tree,
Yet you are halesome and fair to see.
Where gat you that joup o' the lily scheen?
That bonny snood o' the birk sae green?

And these roses, the fairest that ever were seen?
Kilmeny, Kilmeny, where have you been?"
Kilmeny looked up with a lovely grace,
But nae smile was seen on Kilmeny's face;
As still was her look, and as still was her e'e,
As the stillness that lay on the emerant lea,
Or the mist that sleeps on the waveless sea.
For Kilmeny had been, she knew not where,
And Kilmeny had seen what she could not declare;
Kilmeny had been where the cock never crew,
Where the rain never fell, and the wind never blew.
But it seemed as the harp of the sky had rung,
And the airs of heaven played round her tongue,
When she spoke of the lovely forms she had seen,
And a land where sin had never been;
A land of love and a land of light,
Withouten sun, or moon, or night;
Where the river swa'd a living stream,
And the light a pure celestial beam;
The land of vision, it would seem,
A still, an everlasting dream.

In yon green-wood there is a waik,
And in that waik there is a wene,
And in that wene there is a maike;
That neither has flesh, blood, nor bane;
And down in yon green-wood he walks his lane.
In that green wene Kilmeny lay,
Her bosom happed wi' flowerets gay;
But the air was soft, and the silence deep,
And bonny Kilmeny fell sound asleep.
She kend nae mair, nor open'd her e'e,
Till waked by the hymns of a far countrye.
She woke on a couch of silk sae slim,
All striped wi' the bars of the rainbow's rim;

And lovely beings round were rife,
Who erst had travelled mortal life;
And aye they smiled and 'gan to speer,
"What spirit has brought this mortal here?"—
"Lang have I journeyed, the world wide,"
A meek and reverend fere replied;
"Baith night and day I have watched the fair,
Eident a thousand years and mair.
Yes, I have watched o'er ilk degree,
Wherever blooms feminitye;
But sinless virgin, free of stain
In mind and body, fand I nane.
Never since the banquet of time
Found I a virgin in her prime,
Till late this bonny maiden I saw,
As spotless as the morning snaw:
Full twenty years she has lived as free
As the spirits that sojourn in this countrye:
I have brought her away frae the snares of men,
That sin or death she never may ken."—
They clasped her waist and her hands sae fair,
They kissed her cheek and they kemed her hair;
And round came many a blooming fere,
Saying, "Bonny Kilmeny, ye're welcome here!
Women are freed of the littand scorn:
O blessed be the day Kilmeny was born!
Now shall the land of the spirits see,
Now shall it ken what a woman may be!
Many a lang year, in sorrow and pain,
Many a lang year through the world we've gane,
Commissioned to watch fair woman-kind,
For it's they who nurice the immortal mind.
We have watched their steps as the dawning shone,
And deep in the green-wood walks alone;

By lily bower and silken bed,
The viewless tears have o'er them shed;
Have soothed their ardent minds to sleep,
Or left the couch of love to weep.
We have seen! we have seen! but the time must come,
And the angels will weep at the day of doom!

"O, would the fairest of mortal kind
Aye keep the holy truths in mind,
That kindred spirits their motions see,
Who watch their ways with anxious e'e,
And grieve for the guilt of humanitye!
O, sweet to Heaven the maiden's prayer,
And the sigh that heaves a bosom sae fair!
And dear to Heaven the words of truth,
And the praise of virtue frae beauty's mouth!
And dear to the viewless forms of air,
The minds that kythe as the body fair!

"O, bonny Kilmeny! free frae stain,
If ever you seek the world again,
That world of sin, of sorrow, and fear,
O, tell of the joys that are waiting here;
And tell of the signs you shall shortly see;
Of the times that are now, and the times that shall be."—
They lifted Kilmeny, they led her away,
And she walked in the light of a sunless day;
The sky was a dome of crystal bright,
The fountain of vision, and fountain of light;
The emerald fields were of dazzling glow,
And the flowers of everlasting blow.
Then deep in the stream her body they laid,
That her youth and beauty never might fade;
And they smil'd on heaven, when they saw her lie
In the stream of life that wandered bye.

And she heard a song, she heard it sung,
She ken'd not where; but sae sweetly it rung,
It fell on the ear like a dream of the morn,—
"O! blest be the day Kilmeny was born!
Now shall the land of the spirits see,
Now shall it ken what a woman may be!
The sun that shines on the world sae bright,
A borrowed gleid frae the fountain of light;
And the moon that sleeks the sky sae dun,
Like a gouden bow or a beamless sun,
Shall wear away and be seen nae mair,
And the angels shall miss them travelling the air.
But lang, lang after, baith night and day,
When the sun and the world have elyed away;
When the sinner has gane to his waesome doom,
Kilmeny shall smile in eternal bloom!"—

They bore her away, she wist not how,
For she felt not arm nor rest below;
But so swift they wained her through the light,
'Twas like the motion of sound or sight;
They seemed to split the gales of air,
And yet nor gale nor breeze was there.
Unnumbered groves below them grew,
They came, they passed, and backward flew,
Like floods of blossoms gliding on,
In moment seen, in moment gone.
O, never vales to mortal view,
Appeared like those o'er which they flew,
That land to human spirits given,
The lowermost vales of the storied heaven;
From thence they can view the world below,
And heaven's blue gates with sapphires glow,
More glory yet unmeet to know.

They bore her far to a mountain green,
To see what mortal never had seen,
And they seated her high on a purple sward,
And bade her heed what she saw and heard,
And note the changes the spirits wrought,
For now she lived in the land of thought.
She looked, and she saw nor sun nor skies,
But a crystal dome of a thousand dyes:
She looked, and she saw nae land aright,
But an endless whirl of glory and light;
And radiant beings went and came,
Far swifter than wind, or the linkèd flame.
She hid her e'en frae the dazzling view;
She looked again, and the scene was new.

She saw a sun in a summer sky,
And clouds of amber sailing bye;
A lovely land beneath her lay,
And that land had glens and mountains gray;
And that land had valleys and hoary piles,
And marled seas, and a thousand isles.
Its fields were speckled, its forests green,
And its lakes were all of a dazzling sheen,
Like magic mirrors, where slumbering lay
The sun, and the sky, and the cloudlet gray;
Which heaved and trembled, and gently swung,
On every shore they seemed to be hung;
For there they were seen on their downward plain
A thousand times and a thousand again;
In winding lake, and placid firth,
Little peaceful heavens in the bosom of earth.

Kilmeny sighed and seemed to grieve,
For she found her heart to that land did cleave;
She saw the corn wave on the vale;
She saw the deer run down the dale;

She saw the plaid and the broad claymore,
And the brows that the badge of freedom bore,—
And she thought she had seen the land before.

She saw a lady sit on a throne,
The fairest that ever the sun shone on!
A lion licked her hand of milk,
And she held him in a leish of silk:
And a leifu' maiden stood at her knee,
With a silver wand and melting e'e;
Her sovereign shield till love stole in,
And poisoned all the fount within.

Then a gruff, untoward bedes-man came,
And hundit the lion on his dame;
And the guardian maid wi' the dauntless e'e,
She dropped a tear, and left her knee;
And she saw till the queen frae the lion fled,
Till the bonniest flower of the world lay dead;
A coffin was set on a distant plain,
And she saw the red blood fall like rain;
Then bonnie Kilmeny's heart grew sair,
And she turned away, and could look nae mair.

Then the gruff grim carle girned amain,
And they trampled him down, but he rose again,
And he baited the lion to deeds of weir,
Till he lapped the blood to the kingdom dear;
And weening his head was danger-preef,
When crowned with the rose and clover leaf,
He gowled at the carle, and chased him away
To feed wi' the deer on the mountain gray.
He gowled at the carle, and he gecked at Heaven,
But his mark was set, and his arles given.
Kilmeny a while her een withdrew;
She looked again, and the scene was new.

She saw before her fair unfurled
One half of all the glowing world,
Where oceans rolled, and rivers ran,
To bound the aims of sinful man.
She saw a people, fierce and fell,
Burst frae their bounds like fiends of hell;
There lilies grew, and the eagle flew,
And she herkèd on her ravening crew,
Till the cities and towers were wrapt in a blaze,
And the thunder it roared o'er the lands and the seas.
The widows they wailed, and the red blood ran,
And she threatened an end to the race of man:
She never lened, nor stood in awe,
Till caught by the lion's deadly paw.
Oh! then the eagle swinked for life,
And brainzelled up a mortal strife;
But flew she north, or flew she south,
She met wi' the gowl o' the lion's mouth.

With a mooted wing and waefu' maen,
The eagle sought her eiry again;
But lang may she cower in her bloody nest,
And lang, lang sleek her wounded breast,
Before she sey another flight,
To play wi' the norland lion's might.

But to sing the sights Kilmeny saw,
So far surpassing nature's law,
The singer's voice wad sink away,
And the string of his harp wad cease to play.
But she saw till the sorrows of man were bye,
And all was love and harmony;—
Till the stars of heaven fell calmly away,
Like flakes of snaw on a winter day.

Then Kilmeny begged again to see
The friends she had left in her ain countrye,
To tell of the place where she had been,
And the glories that lay in the land unseen!
To warn the living maidens fair,
The loved of Heaven, the spirits' care,
That all whose minds unmeled remain
Shall bloom in beauty when time is gane.

With distant music, soft and deep,
They lulled Kilmeny sound asleep;
And when she awakened, she lay her lane,
All happed with flowers, in the green-wood wene.
When seven long years had come and fled,
When grief was calm, and hope was dead,
When scarce was remembered Kilmeny's name,
Late, late in a gloamin' Kilmeny came hame.
And O, her beauty was fair to see,
But still and steadfast was her e'e!
Such beauty bard may never declare,
For there was no pride nor passion there;
And the soft desire of maiden's een
In that mild face could never be seen.
Her seymar was the lily flower,
And her cheek the moss-rose in the shower;
And her voice like the distant melodye,
That floats along the twilight sea.
But she loved to raike the lanely glen,
And keeped afar frae the haunts of men;
Her holy hymns unheard to sing,
To suck the flowers, and drink the spring.
But wherever her peaceful form appeared,
The wild beasts of the hill were cheered;
The wolf played blythely round the field,
The lordly byson lowed, and kneeled;

The dun deer wooed with manner bland,
And cowered aneath her lily hand.
And when at even the woodlands rung,
When hymns of other worlds she sung
In ecstasy of sweet devotion,
O, then the glen was all in motion!
The wild beasts of the forest came,
Broke from their bughts and faulds the tame,
And goved around, charmed and amazed;
Even the dull cattle crooned and gazed,
And murmured, and looked with anxious pain
For something the mystery to explain.
The buzzard came with the throstle-cock;
The corby left her houf in the rock;
The blackbird alang wi' the eagle flew;
The hind came tripping o'er the dew;
The wolf and the kid their raike began,
And the tod and the lamb and the leveret ran;
The hawk and the hern attour them hung,
And the merle and the mavis forhooyed their young;
And all in a peaceful ring were hurled—
It was like an eve in a sinless world!

When a month and a day had come and gane,
Kilmeny sought the green-wood wene;
There laid her down on the leaves sae green,
And Kilmeny on earth was never mair seen.
But O! the words that fell frae her mouth,
Were words of wonder, and words of truth!
But all the land were in fear and dread,
For they kendna whether she was living or dead.
It wasna her hame, and she couldna remain;
She left this world of sorrow and pain,
And returned to the land of thought again.

William Wordsworth.

1770—1850.

On the 7th of April, 1770, at the town of Cockermouth, on the borders of the highlands of Cumberland, William Wordsworth, the most potent force in the poetry of the nineteenth century, was born. His father, John Wordsworth, was an attorney-at-law and law-agent to Sir James Lowther, and William was the second born of a family of five. The poet's mother, Anne Cookson, born 1747, married 1766, and died 1778; his father, born 1741, died in 1783, leaving William in his fourteenth year, with four other children but slenderly provided for. Of these, Dorothy, the only sister, became the lifelong companion of the poet, and Christopher, the youngest brother, Master of Trinity and Chaplain to the House of Commons. William passed successively from a dame's school at Penrith to the Grammar School at Hawkshead, and in 1787 to St. John's College, Cambridge. Like many others, who have subsequently succeeded in literature, he failed to obtain marked distinction at the University, modestly taking his degree in 1791 and passing out into the world of active life without any very definite views as to his future career.

In 1790 he paid a visit to France and Switzerland, in company with Robert Jones, a college friend subsequently fellow of St. John's. After

leaving college in 1791, he again crossed the Channel, and remained upon the Continent for over twelve months. These were stormy times in France, and Wordsworth, in common with many of the youth of England, became keenly interested in the struggle which culminated in the French Revolution. His sympathy with the popular cause led him into some danger, but he had formed high hopes of a period of liberty about to dawn, and shrank not from the risk he ran for the privilege of aiding it. The excesses of the revolutionists, however, alienated his sympathies, and the "Reign of Terror" caused his return to his native land.

In 1793 Wordsworth published "An Evening Walk" and "Descriptive Sketches," the former recording experiences in Westmoreland, and the latter describing his Swiss tour. These effusions brought him little public notice, but gained for him what was more important, the appreciation and the ultimate friendship of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, who thus, in his "Biographia Literaria" (chap. iv.), refers to the circumstance: "During the last year of my residence at Cambridge, I became acquainted with Mr. Wordsworth's first publication, entitled, Descriptive Sketches;' and seldom, if ever, was the emergence of an original poetical genius above the literary horizon more evidently announced." The poet was at this time without an object in life and without means of subsistence, living alternately with one or another of his friends. The year 1795 brought him a legacy of £900, by the will of Raisley Calvert, a brother of William Calvert, one of his special friends. This sum, £400 of which was laid out in an annuity, with a legacy

of £100 received by his sister, and £100 realised by the "Lyrical Ballads," financed the poet's household for the next seven years.

In 1796 Wordsworth settled at Racedown, in Dorset, with his sister, Dorothy, and determined to make poetry the supreme business of his life. Dorothy Wordsworth, who was one year younger than her brother, had considerable influence over him, an influence always exercised for good. The poet's indebtedness to his sister can scarcely be over-estimated. Many a grateful tribute to her wise and gentle power may be culled from his writings in both prose and verse. Professor Knight in his great work has quoted several illustrations of this. In the poet's verses on "The Sparrow's Nest" (p. 241), he says of her—

> "She gave me eyes, she gave me ears,
> And humble cares, and delicate fears;
> A heart—the fountain of sweet tears—
> And love, and thought, and joy."

Describing himself as like—

> "A rock with torrents roaring, with the clouds
> Familiar, and a favourite of the stars"—

the poet goes on to say—

> "But thou didst plant its crevices with flowers,
> Hang it with shrubs that twinkle in the breeze,
> And teach the little birds to build their nests,
> And warble in its chambers."

Her influence, amid doubt and difficulty, he writes—

> "Maintained for me a saving intercourse
> With my true self."

And again—

> "Her voice was like a hidden brook that sang;
> The thought of her was like a flash of light,
> Or an unseen companionship."

Nor were there wanting in his earlier years other

influences which tended to the development of the poetic force within him.

Orphaned in childhood, he found in Nature a second mother, who nurtured him with tender sympathy and opened out her heart of love to him. In Book II. of "The Prelude," his autobiographical poem, he writes of himself in his seventeenth year:—

"From Nature and her overflowing soul,
I had received so much, that all my thoughts
Were steeped in feeling; I was only then
Contented, when with bliss ineffable
I felt the sentiment of Being spread
O'er all that moves and all that seemeth still,
O'er all that, lost beyond the reach of thought
And human knowledge, to the human eye
Invisible, yet liveth to the heart;
O'er all that leaps and runs, and shouts and sings,
Or beats the gladsome air; o'er all that glides
Beneath the wave, yea, in the wave itself,
And mighty depth of waters. Wonder not
If high the transport, great the joy I felt,
Communing in this sort through earth and heaven,
With every form of creature, as it looked
Towards the Uncreated with a countenance
Of adoration, with an eye of love.
One song they sang, and it was audible,
Most audible then when the fleshly ear,
O'ercome by humblest prelude of that strain,
Forgot her functions, and slept undisturbed."

Again in "The Excursion" (Book I.), evidently referring to his own experiences, he writes—

"Such was the Boy—but for the growing Youth
What soul was his, when, from the naked top
Of some bold headland, he beheld the sun
Rise up, and bathe the world in light! He looked—
Ocean and earth, the solid frame of earth
And ocean's liquid mass, in gladness lay
Beneath him:—Far and wide the clouds were touched,
And in their silent faces could be read

Unutterable love. Sound needed none,
Nor any voice of joy; his spirit drank
The spectacle; sensation, soul, and form,
All melted into him: they swallowed up
His animal being; in them did he live,
And by them did he live; they were his life.
In such access of mind, in such high hour
Of visitation from the living God,
Thought was not; in enjoyment it expired.
No thanks he breathed, he proffered no request;
Rapt into still communion that transcends
The imperfect offices of prayer and praise,
His mind was a thanksgiving to the power
That made him; it was blessedness and love!"

At Racedown the poet wrote his tragedy, "The Borderers," which, however, he did not publish until 1842. Wordsworth had no dramatic power, and this, his only attempt at the drama, signally failed. Here, too, he was visited by Coleridge, whom he had previously met at Bristol, and to be near whom he removed to Alfoxden, July 1797. The famous walking tour, during which the two poets projected the plan of the "Lyrical Ballads," was an early outcome of this association. Neither of the pedestrians was burdened with a heavy purse, and to meet the cost of their holiday some extra effort was required; this took the form of the volume referred to, to which Coleridge contributed "The Ancient Mariner," and three lesser pieces, and Wordsworth the shorter poems which constituted the remainder of the contents. The trip took place in Devonshire, and Dorothy Wordsworth bore the poets company.

The lines on which the volume was to be based were discussed at length as the poets tramped over the Quantocks. It was to prove an epoch-marking if not an epoch-making book, and Coleridge thus

describes the principles on which it was composed: "During the first year that Mr. Wordsworth and I were neighbours our conversations turned frequently on the two cardinal points of poetry—the power of exciting the sympathy of the reader by a faithful adherence to the truth of nature, and the power of giving the interest of novelty by the modifying colours of the imagination. . . . The thought suggested itself (to which of us I do not recollect) that a series of poems might be composed of two sorts. In the one, the incidents and agents were to be, in part at least, supernatural; and the excellence aimed at was to consist in the interesting of the affections by the dramatic truth of such emotions, as would naturally accompany such situations, supposing them real. . . . For the second class, subjects were to be chosen from ordinary life; the characters and incidents were to be such as will be found in every village and its vicinity. . . . In this idea originated the plan of the 'Lyrical Ballads.'" ("Biographia Literaria," chap. xiv.)

The "Lyrical Ballads" were published by Joseph Cottle, the Bristol publisher, in 1798. The volume attracted little public notice, but it marked an era in the progress of English literature. In his contributions to this volume Wordsworth threw off the influence of the old school of poetic thought and form, and stood forth as the champion of severe simplicity and quiet force. The poem, "Lines written above Tintern Abbey," appeared in this volume, as did also "We are Seven," probably the most widely popular of Wordsworth's poems. The poet's excellences and defects are alike shown in his "Lyrical Ballads;" he is always simple,

sometimes rising to a noble strength, at other times sinking into weakness and puerility.

The Wordsworths and Coleridge now visited Germany in company, where they remained during the winter of 1798-9, the Wordsworths settling at Goslar and Coleridge proceeding to Ratzeburg, and afterwards to Gottingen, for the purposes of study. During his stay at Goslar, Wordsworth wrote "The Fountain," p. 234, "The Two April Mornings," p. 232; the several poems on "Lucy," pp. 237-40; as well as "The Poet's Epitaph," and "Ruth;" in addition to which he planned "The Recluse," and wrote some portions of "The Prelude." The lines commencing "There was a boy; ye knew him well, ye cliffs," p. 317, were sent to Coleridge, at Ratzeburg, in manuscript.

On their return to England Wordsworth and his sister went to reside at Grasmere, where they remained until 1808. At this time their income did not exceed a hundred pounds a year, and Dorothy added to the duties of working housekeeper the offices of private secretary and travelling companion: she wrote out all her brother's poems, read to him, and accompanied him in his long country rambles. In the year 1800 a second volume of "Lyrical Ballads" appeared, and in 1802 the poet married Mary Hutchinson, whom he had first met in his earliest school days, at the old dame's school at Penrith, and about whom he afterwards wrote the verses beginning "She was a Phantom of Delight," p. 250, and the sonnets, "To a Painter," etc. At Grasmere the poet produced the best work of his life. "The Brothers," "Michael," p. 263, the "Ode to Duty," p. 290, the lines on the "Character of the

Happy Warrior," p. 292, and "Resolution and Independence, or the Leech Gatherer," p. 278, belong to this period, as do also the "Memorials" of his first tour in Scotland, made in 1803. In 1808 the Wordsworths removed to Allan Bank, and in 1813 to Rydal Mount, where the poet spent the remainder of his life. He died on Tuesday, April 23rd, 1850, and was buried in Grasmere Churchyard.

This life, largely as it must figure in the annals of English poetry, was one of little incident. The poet's appointment in 1813 to the office of Distributor of Stamps for Westmoreland, and his acceptance, thirty years later, on the death of his friend Robert Southey, of the laureateship, are the main events of his more public life; and for the rest, "plain living and high thinking" filled the happy, uneventful years. From 1799 to 1805 Wordsworth was at work on "The Prelude," a poem in which he traces his own mental development, but which was not published until after his death. This poem was intended by him to be "a prelude" to "The Recluse," a great philosophical poem, setting forth "the sensations and opinions of a poet living in retirement," a work which he never finished, and of which "The Excursion," published in 1814, was the only part issued in his lifetime. Wordsworth himself described the ideal of "The Recluse" as a Gothic Church, in relation to which his shorter poems bore the offices "of little cells, oratories, and sepulchral recesses." Looked at in this architectural light, many of Wordsworth's shorter poems shine as noble monuments of departed worth, and chaste memorials of pure affection.

"The Excursion" is a poem of very unequal merit,

and regarded as a whole, a great deal might be said, and a great deal has been admitted, in harmony with, if not in defence of Jeffrey's contemptuous "This will never do!" "Judged by ordinary standards," says Mr. F. W. H. Myers, in his charming monologue in the English Men of Letters series, "'The Excursion' appears an epic without action, and with two heroes, the Pastor and the Wanderer, whose characters are identical. Its form is cumbrous in the extreme, and large tracts of it have little claim to the name of poetry." That the work contains passages as fine as anything the poet ever wrote is undoubtedly true, but the inspiration is unsustained and the gems gain nothing from their setting.

While disclaiming any attempt to deduce a definite scheme of philosophy from "The Excursion," Mr. Myers gives, in the same work, a very clear indication of its moral teaching. "As a guide to conduct," he says, "Wordsworth's precepts are not in themselves either unintelligible or visionary; for, whereas some moralists would have us amend nature, and others bid us follow her, there is apt to be something impracticable in the first maxim, and something vague in the second. . . . But Wordsworth, while impressing on us conformity to nature as the rule of life, suggests a test of such conformity which can be practically applied. 'The child is father to the man,'—in the words which stand as introduction to his poetical works,—and Wordsworth holds that the instincts and pleasures of a healthy childhood sufficiently indicate the lines on which our maturer characters should be formed. The joy which began in the mere sense of existence should be maintained by

hopeful faith; the simplicity which began in inexperience should be recovered by meditation; the love which originated in the family circle should expand itself over the race of men. And the calming and elevating influence of Nature—which to Wordsworth's memory seemed the inseparable concomitant of childish years—should be constantly invoked throughout life to keep the heart fresh and the eyes open to the mysteries discernible through her radiant veil. In a word, the family affections, if duly fostered, the influences of Nature, if duly sought, with some knowledge of the best books, are material enough to 'build up our moral being,' and to outweigh the less deep-seated impulses which prompt to wrong-doing." This, together with the famous "Ode on Intimations of Immortality" (p. 283), may be taken as a key to what is sometimes called the Wordsworthian philosophy.

Wordsworth's poetry has probably evoked more discussion than that of any other poet of the century. The inequality of his work, and his own inability to distinguish between the failures and successes of his pen gave ample opportunity for hostile criticism, and the opportunity was freely taken. Jeffrey, who pointed the shafts of the *Edinburgh Review* at the prophet of Rydal Mount, made no secret of his intention to crush Wordsworth; an avowal which drew from Southey, in a letter to Scott, the contemptuous rejoinder that "he might as well seat himself upon Skiddaw, and fancy he had crushed the mountain."

That Wordsworth should have excited the opposition of contemporary criticism need cause but little surprise, for, to quote Coleridge, so far did he

break from the school that preceded him that he had to "create the taste by which he was to be relished," and "to teach the art by which he was to be judged," and this was necessarily a work of time. His theory of poetic composition, too, as set forth in the preface to the second and third editions of the "Ballads," was just such as was calculated to excite controversy, and to draw attention from the poems which, after all, are their own best argument, to a vain and profitless discussion. "Had Wordsworth," says Professor Knight, "omitted his preface and pruned a few of the more trivial phrases and stanzas, the 'new departure' in our English poetry —which the publication of that small volume at Bristol, in 1798, inaugurated, might have been rapid and continuous."

"I do not doubt," says Wordsworth in this famous preface (third edition, 1802), "that it may be safely affirmed that there neither is, nor can be, any essential difference between the language of prose and metrical composition. . . . If it be affirmed that rhyme and metrical arrangement of themselves constitute a distinction which overturns what I have been saying on the strict affinity of metrical language with that of prose, and paves the way for other artificial distinctions which the mind voluntarily admits, I answer that the language of such poetry as I am recommending is, as far as possible, a selection of the language really spoken by men; that this selection, whenever it is made with true taste and feeling, will of itself form a distinction far greater than would at first be imagined, and will entirely separate the composition from the vulgarity and meanness of ordinary life; and if metre be superadded

thereto, I believe that a dissimilitude will be produced altogether sufficient for the gratification of a rational mind. What other distinction would we have? Whence is it to come? And where is it to exist?"

For the poet to avow that he had taken as much pains to avoid what was usually called poetic diction as others ordinarily took to produce it, was to challenge the judgment of those others in a way that was sure to provoke reply; and to contend that the sole difference between prose and metrical composition is in the arrangement of "language really spoken by men" in metrical form, was to claim a great deal too much for the language of common life, and to open up a controversy in which it was not difficult for his opponents to prove his practice inconsistent with his principles.

"In the hot controversy which followed," says Dean Church, "both disputants made false moves: the Edinburgh reviewers were false in their thrusts, Wordsworth was false in his parry. He was right in protesting against the doctrine that a thing is not poetical because it is not expressed in a certain conventional mintage; he was wrong in denying that there is a mintage of words fit for poetry and unsuitable for ordinary prose. They were utterly wrong in thinking that he was not a most careful and fastidious artist in language; but they had some reason for their objections, and some excuse for their ridicule, when it was laid down, without distinguishing or qualifying, that there was no difference between the language of prose and poetry, and that the language of poetry was false and bad unless it was what might be spoken in the intercourse of common life."

On the merits of this famous controversy the world has long since made up its mind. It was a battle between thoughts and words, fought out at a time when false ideas obtained on many subjects, when clothes were supposed to make the gentleman, and the gilded trappings of a cheap rhetoric were mistaken for the divine form of song. The result has been a recognition of the supremacy of thought, and the subservience of mere language,—the admission that the mean thought is no less mean because it is expressed in polished periods, and that the great in thought

> "needs not the foreign aid of ornament,
> And is when unadorned adorned the most."

Surely it becomes us, who are the inheritors of a purer literature, to look back with filial gratitude, and thank the poet for the destruction of the gaudy garments which in his time still hung upon the ghost of the dead school.

Another cause of Wordsworth's failure to secure popular appreciation was doubtless the absence from his writings of the dramatic element, which appeals with so much vividness and force to the average mind. To the vast majority of mankind life in action will always be more interesting than life in repose, and no one need wonder that "Marmion" should attract a larger number of readers than "The Excursion."

Coleridge who, more than any man, has helped the world to a true appreciation of his friend, thus in the "Biographia Literaria" (chap. iv.) refers to the qualities in which Wordsworth differed from his immediate predecessors, and by which he secured the love and admiration of those who followed him.

"It was the union of deep feeling with profound thought; the fine balance of truth in observing, with the imaginative faculty in modifying the objects observed; and above all, the original gift of spreading the tone, the *atmosphere*, and with it the depth and height of the ideal world around forms, incidents and situations, of which, for the common view, custom had bedimmed all the lustre, had dried up the sparkle and the dewdrops." To which he adds, quoting from *The Friend* (No. 5, p. 76), "To find no contradiction in the union of old and new; to contemplate the Ancient of Days, and all His works with feelings as fresh, as if all had then sprung forth at the first creative fiat; characterises the mind that feels the riddle of the world, and may help to unravel it. To carry on the feelings of childhood into the powers of manhood; to combine the child's sense of wonder and novelty with the appearances, which every day for perhaps forty years had rendered familiar;—

> 'With sun, and moon, and stars, throughout the year,
> And man and woman'—

this is the character and privilege of genius."

Further, Coleridge, in the same work (chap. xxii.), while admitting his defects, gives the following summary of the excellences of Wordsworth's poetry, and in doing so pronounces a judgment which is substantially the verdict of later criticism. These characteristics are, he says: "First, an austere purity of language, both grammatically and logically; in short, a perfect appropriateness of the words to the meaning. . . . Second; a correspondent weight and sanity of the Thoughts and Sentiments,—won, not from books, but—from the poet's own meditative observation. They are *fresh* and have the dew

upon them. . . . Even throughout his smaller poems there is scarcely one which is not rendered valuable by some just and original reflection. . . . Third; the sinewy strength and originality of single lines and paragraphs; the frequent *curiosa felicitas* of his diction. . . . Fourth; the perfect truth of nature in his images and descriptions, as taken immediately from nature, and proving a long and genial intimacy with the very spirit which gives the physiognomic expression to all the works of nature. . . . Fifth; a meditative pathos, a union of deep and subtle thought with sensibility; a sympathy with man as man; the sympathy indeed of a contemplator, rather than a fellow-sufferer or co-mate (*spectator, haud particeps*), but of a contemplator, from whose view no difference of rank conceals the sameness of the nature; no injuries of wind or weather, of toil, or even of ignorance, wholly disguise the human face divine. . . . Last, and pre-eminently, I challenge for this poet the gift of IMAGINATION in the highest and strictest sense of the word. In the play of *Fancy*, Wordsworth, to my feelings, is not always graceful, and sometimes *recondite*. The *likeness* is occasionally too strange, or demands too peculiar a point of view, or is such as appears the creature of pre-determined research, rather than spontaneous presentation. Indeed, his fancy seldom displays itself as mere and unmodified fancy. But in imaginative power he stands nearest of all modern writers to Shakespeare and Milton, and yet in a kind perfectly unborrowed and his own. To employ his own words, which are at once an instance and an illustration, he does indeed, to all thoughts and to all objects—

'—add the gleam,
The light that never was on sea or land,
The consecration, and the poet's dream.'"

No poet ever had a nobler purpose in his work than Wordsworth. He claimed for every great poet that he should be a teacher, and he desired to be a teacher himself or nothing. In a letter written to Lady Beaumont, in May, 1807, he describes his object to be: "To console the afflicted; to add sunshine to daylight by making the happy happier; to teach the young and the gracious of every age *to see, to think, and feel*, and therefore to become more actively and securely virtuous." It is impossible for "the gracious" not to love and venerate the memory of a man whose purpose was so holy, and whose life and work so consistently fulfilled it.

Wordsworth's natural qualifications were of the highest order. He had a power of observation which has been well compared to that of Turner, and a realisation of the spirit of nature which enabled him to speak for her with the chaste dignity of her own tongue. He had a profound sincerity of soul which he showed, both in the selection and the treatment of his subjects, and a loyalty to truth in its large and imaginative sense, which invests with moral grandeur the work he elevated by poetic instinct. He was forcible and original in thought, vivid and rich in imagination, and had a wondrous power over the elements of purity, beauty, and dignity in simple diction. He was a good as well as a wise man, and spoke the truth as well as the desire of his heart, when he said of his own works, "They will co-operate with the benign tendencies in human nature and society,

and will, in their degree, be efficacious in making men wiser, better, and happier."

He recognised in a fuller degree than any of his predecessors that truth, in all its splendid variety of aspect, is the first law of poetry; and he saw with a keener eye than they did the inexhaustible resources of truth, to be explored by quiet thought—"On man, on nature, and on human life." He realised with Duke senior in *As You Like It* (act ii., scene 1), the teaching power of nature, and studied among the hills of Cumberland the lesson that the Duke learnt in the Forest of Arden:—

> *Duke S.* Now, my co-mates, and brothers in exile,
> Hath not old custom made this life more sweet
> Than that of painted pomp? Are not these woods
> More free from peril than the envious court?
> Here feel we but the penalty of Adam,
> The season's difference; as, the icy fang,
> And churlish chiding of the winter's wind;
> Which, when it bites and blows upon my body,
> Even till I shrink with cold, I smile, and say,—
> This is no flattery: these are counsellors,
> That feelingly persuade me what I am.
> Sweet are the uses of adversity,
> Which, like the toad, ugly and venomous,
> Wears yet a precious jewel in his head;
> And this our life exempt from public haunt,
> Finds tongues in trees, books in the running brooks,
> Sermons in stones, and good in every thing.

By constant intercourse with Nature Wordsworth became, as it were, her own familiar spirit, to whom she specially revealed herself, making him her mouthpiece, or as Matthew Arnold puts it, taking the pen out of his hand and writing for him, "with her own bare, sheer, penetrating power."

To him the world was "full of souls," and

everything had life and hope. The mountains talked to him, and the valleys responded to his thought; the tree that bowed its head for want of water prayed after its manner for the summer rain, and every blade of grass that bent and breakfasted upon the morning dew, returned its grateful thanks. Infused with this spirit, nature became, in a moral and spiritual sense, vital and companionable, and the poet when most in solitude was least alone. To this intercourse with "things inanimate," this communion with "higher nature," he sought to introduce humanity. Realising the truth of Blake's line, "Great things are done when men and mountains meet," he urged the union of men and mountains, and chanted aforetime "the spousal verse." He drew deeply of nature's well-spring at its source, and found therein "a fountain of living water," full of refreshment and inspiration for the jaded heart of man, and having rested on enchanted ground and quaffed the nectar of perennial youth with all a saviour's purpose, he invites the weary into quiet resting places and bids the thirsty drink.

ALFRED H. MILES.

POEMS IN LYRICAL FORM.

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

I.—LINES WRITTEN IN EARLY SPRING.

1798.

I HEARD a thousand blended notes,
While in a grove I sate reclined,
In that sweet mood when pleasant thoughts
Bring sad thoughts to the mind.

To her fair works did Nature link
The human soul that through me ran;
And much it grieved my heart to think
What man has made of man.

Through primrose tufts, in that *sweet* [1] bower,
The periwinkle trailed its wreaths;
And 'tis my faith that every flower
Enjoys the air it breathes.

The birds around me hopped and played;
Their thoughts I cannot measure:—
But the least motion *that* [2] they made
It seemed a thrill of pleasure.

The budding twigs spread out their fan,
To catch the breezy air;
And I must think, do all I can,
That there was pleasure there.

If this belief from heaven be sent,
If such be Nature's holy plan,
Have I not reason to lament
What man has made of man?

II.—EXPOSTULATION AND REPLY.

1798.

"WHY, William, on that old grey stone,
Thus for the length of half a day,
Why, William, sit you thus alone,
And dream your time away?

Where are your books?—that light bequeathed
To Beings else forlorn and blind!
Up! up! and drink the spirit breathed
From dead men to their kind.

You look round on your Mother Earth,
As if she for no purpose bore you;
As if you were her first-born birth,
And none had lived before you!"

One morning thus, by Esthwaite lake,
When life was sweet, I knew not why,
To me my good friend Matthew spake,
And thus I made reply:

"The eye—it cannot choose but see;
We cannot bid the ear be still;
Our bodies feel, where'er they be,
Against, or with our will.

Nor less I deem that there are Powers
Which of themselves our minds impress;
That we can feed this mind of ours
In a wise passiveness.

Think you, 'mid all this mighty sum
Of things for ever speaking,
That nothing of itself will come,
But we must still be seeking?

—Then ask not wherefore, here, alone,
Conversing as I may,
I sit upon this old grey stone,
And dream my time away."

III.—THE TABLES TURNED.

AN EVENING SCENE ON THE SAME SUBJECT.

1798.

UP! up! my Friend, and quit your books;
Or surely you'll grow double:
Up! up! my Friend, and clear your looks;
Why all this toil and trouble?

The sun, above the mountain's head,
A freshening lustre mellow
Through all the long green fields has spread,
His first sweet evening yellow.

Books! 'tis a dull and endless strife:
Come, hear the woodland linnet,
How sweet his music! on my life,
There's more of wisdom in it.

And hark! how blithe the throstle sings!
He, too, is no mean preacher:
Come forth into the light of things,
Let Nature be your teacher.

She has a world of ready wealth,
Our minds and hearts to bless—
Spontaneous wisdom breathed by health
Truth breathed by cheerfulness.

One impulse from a vernal wood
  May teach you more of man,
Of moral evil and of good,
  Than all the sages can.

Sweet is the lore which Nature brings;
  Our meddling intellect
Mis-shapes the beauteous forms of things;—
  We murder to dissect.

Enough of Science and of Art;
  Close up those barren leaves;
Come forth, and bring with you a heart
  That watches and receives.

IV.—THE TWO APRIL MORNINGS.

1799.

WE walked along, while bright and red
  Uprose the morning sun;
And Matthew stopped, he looked, and said,
  "The will of God be done!"

A village schoolmaster was he,
  With hair of glittering grey;
As blithe a man as you could see
  On a spring holiday.

And on that morning, through the grass
  And by the steaming rills,
We travelled merrily, to pass
  A day among the hills.

"Our work," said I, "was well begun:
Then, from thy breast what thought,
Beneath so beautiful a sun,
So sad a sigh has brought?"

A second time did Matthew stop;
And fixing still his eye
Upon the eastern mountain-top,
To me he made reply:

"Yon cloud with that long purple cleft
Brings fresh into my mind
A day like this which I have left
Full thirty years behind.

And just above yon slope of corn
Such colours, and no other,
Were in the sky, that April morn,
Of this the very brother.

With rod and line I sued the sport
Which that sweet season gave,
And, to the churchyard come, stopped short
Beside my daughter's grave.

Nine summers had she scarcely seen,
The pride of all the vale;
And then she sang;—she would have been
A very nightingale.

Six feet in earth my Emma lay;
And yet I loved her more,
For so it seemed, than till that day
I e'er had loved before.

And, turning from her grave, I met,
Beside the churchyard yew,
A blooming Girl, whose hair was wet
With points of morning dew.

A basket on her head she bare;
Her brow was smooth and white:
To see a child so very fair,
It was a pure delight!

No fountain from its rocky cave
E'er tripped with foot so free;
She seemed as happy as a wave
That dances on the sea.

There came from me a sigh of pain
Which I could ill confine;
I looked at her, and looked again:
And did not wish her mine!"

Matthew is in his grave, yet now,
Methinks, I see him stand,
As at that moment, with a bough
Of wilding in his hand.

V.—THE FOUNTAIN.

A CONVERSATION.

1799.

WE talked with open heart, and tongue
Affectionate and true,
A pair of friends, though I was young,
And Matthew seventy-two.

We lay beneath a spreading oak,
Beside a mossy seat;
And from the turf a fountain broke,
And gurgled at our feet.

"Now Matthew!" said I, "let us match
This water's pleasant tune
With some old border song, or catch
That suits a summer's noon;

"Or of the church-clock and the chimes
Sing here beneath the shade,
That half-mad thing of witty rhymes
Which you last April made!"

In silence Matthew lay, and eyed
The spring beneath the tree;
And thus the dear old Man replied,
The grey-haired man of glee:

"*Down to the vale this water steers,*[3]
How merrily it goes!
'Twill murmur on a thousand years,
And flow as now it flows.

"And here, on this delightful day,
I cannot choose but think
How oft, a vigorous man, I lay
Beside this fountain's brink.

"My eyes are dim with childish tears,
My heart is idly stirred,
For the same sound is in my ears
Which in those days I heard.

"Thus fares it still in our decay:
And yet the wiser mind
Mourns less for what age takes away
Than what it leaves behind.

"The blackbird *in the summer*[4] trees,
The lark *upon*[5] the hill,
Let loose their carols when they please,
Are quiet when they will.

"With Nature never do *they* wage
A foolish strife; they see
A happy youth, and their old age
Is beautiful and free:

"But we are pressed by heavy laws;
And often, glad no more,
We wear a face of joy, because
We have been glad of yore.

"If there be one who need bemoan
His kindred laid in earth,
The household hearts that were his own,
It is the man of mirth.

"My days, my Friend, are almost gone,
My life has been approved,
And many love me; but by none
Am I enough beloved."

"Now both himself and me he wrongs
The man who thus complains!
I live and sing my idle songs
Upon these happy plains;

"And, Matthew, for thy children dead
I'll be a son to thee!"
At this he grasped my hand, and said,
"Alas! that cannot be."

We rose up from the fountain-side;
And down the smooth descent
Of the green sheep-track did we glide;
And through the wood we went;

And, ere we came to Leonard's rock,
He sang those witty rhymes
About the crazy old church-clock,
And the bewildered chimes.

VI.—LUCY.

1799.

I.

STRANGE fits of passion have I known:
And I will dare to tell,
But in the Lover's ear alone,
What once to me befell.

When she I loved *was strong and gay*[6]
And like[7] a rose in June,
I to her cottage bent my way,
Beneath *the*[8] evening-moon.

Upon the moon I fixed my eye,
All over the wide lea;
My horse trudged on—and we[9] drew nigh
Those paths so dear to me.

And now we reached the orchard-plot;
And, as we climbed the hill,
Towards the roof of Lucy's cot
The moon descended still.[10]

In one of those sweet dreams I slept,
Kind Nature's gentlest boon!
And all the while my eyes I kept
On the descending moon.

My horse moved on; hoof after hoof
He raised, and never stopped:
When down behind the cottage-roof,
At once, the bright moon dropped.

What fond and wayward thoughts will slide
Into a Lover's head!—
"O, mercy!" to myself I cried,
"If Lucy should be dead!"

II.

SHE dwelt among the untrodden ways
Beside the springs of Dove,
A Maid whom there were none to praise
And very few to love;

A violet by a mossy stone
Half hidden from the eye!
—Fair as a star, when only one
Is shining in the sky.

She lived unknown, and few could know
When Lucy ceased to be;
But she is in her grave, and, oh,
The difference to me!

III.

I TRAVELLED among unknown men
In lands beyond the sea;
Nor, England! did I know till then
What love I bore to thee.

'Tis past, that melancholy dream!
Nor will I quit thy shore
A second time; for still I seem
To love thee more and more.

Among thy mountains did I feel
The joy of my desire;
And she I cherished turned her wheel
Beside an English fire.

Thy mornings showed, thy nights concealed
The bowers where Lucy played;
And thine, too, is the last green field
That Lucy's eyes surveyed.

IV.

THREE years she grew in sun and shower,
Then Nature said, "A lovelier flower
On earth was never sown;
This Child I to myself will take,
She shall be mine, and I will make
A Lady of my own.

Myself will to my darling be
Both law and impulse: and with me
The Girl, in rock and plain,
In earth and heaven, in glade and bower,
Shall feel an overseeing power
To kindle or restrain.

She shall be sportive as the fawn
That wild with glee across the lawn
Or up the mountain springs;
And hers shall be the breathing balm,
And hers the silence and the calm
Of mute insensate things.

The floating clouds their state shall lend
To her; for her the willow bend;

Nor shall she fail to see
Even in the motions of the Storm
Grace that shall mould the Maiden's form
By silent sympathy.

The stars of midnight shall be dear
To her; and she shall lean her ear
In many a secret place
Where rivulets dance their wayward round,
And beauty born of murmuring sound
Shall pass into her face.

And vital feelings of delight
Shall rear her form to stately height,
Her virgin bosom swell;
Such thoughts to Lucy I will give
While she and I together live
Here in this happy dell."

Thus Nature spake—The work was done—
How soon my Lucy's race was run!
She died, and left to me
This heath, this calm, and quiet scene;
The memory of what has been,
And never more will be.

V.

A SLUMBER did my spirit seal;
I had no human fears:
She seemed a thing that could not feel
The touch of earthly years.

No motion has she now, no force;
She neither hears nor sees,
Rolled round in earth's diurnal course
With rocks and stones and trees.

VII.—THE SPARROW'S NEST.

1801.

BEHOLD, within the leafy shade,
Those bright blue eggs together laid!
On me the chance-discovered sight
Gleamed like a vision of delight.
I started—seeming to espy
The home and sheltered bed,—
The Sparrow's dwelling, which, hard by
My Father's house, in wet or dry,
My Sister Emmeline and I
Together visited.

She looked at it and seemed to fear it;
Dreading tho' wishing to be near it:
Such heart was in her, being then
A little Prattler among men.
The Blessing of my later years
Was with me when a boy:
She gave me eyes, she gave me ears,
And humble cares, and delicate fears;
A heart,—the fountain of sweet tears—
And love, and thought, and joy.

VIII.—TO A BUTTERFLY.

1802.

I.

STAY near me—do not take thy flight!
A little longer stay in sight!
Much converse do I find in thee,
Historian of my infancy!
Float near me; do not yet depart!
Dead times revive in thee:

Thou bring'st, gay Creature as thou art!
A solemn image to my heart,
My Father's family!

Oh! pleasant, pleasant were the days,
The time, when, in our childish plays,
My Sister Emmeline and I
Together chased the Butterfly!
A very hunter did I rush
Upon the prey:—with leaps and springs
I followed on from brake to bush;
But she, God love her! feared to brush
The dust from off its wings.

II.

I'VE watch'd you now a full half-hour,
Self-poised upon that yellow flower;
And, little Butterfly! indeed
I know not if you sleep or feed.
How motionless!—not frozen seas
More motionless! and then
What joy awaits you, when the breeze
Hath found you out among the trees
And calls you forth again!

This plot of orchard-ground is ours;
My trees they are, my Sister's flowers;
Here rest your wings when they are weary;
Here lodge as in a sanctuary!
Come often to us, fear no wrong;
Sit near us on the bough!
We'll talk of sunshine and of song;
And summer days when we were young,
Sweet childish days, that were as long
As twenty days are now.

IX. MY HEART LEAPS UP.

1802.

MY heart leaps up when I behold
A rainbow in the sky:
So was it when my life began;
So is it now I am a Man;
So be it when I shall grow old,
Or let me die!
The Child is father of the Man;
And I could wish my days to be
Bound each to each by natural piety.

X.—THE GREEN LINNET.

1803.

BENEATH these fruit-tree boughs that shed
Their snow-white blossoms on my head,
With brightest sunshine round me spread
Of spring's unclouded weather,
In this sequestered nook how sweet
To sit upon my orchard-seat!
And birds and flowers once more to greet,
My last year's friends together.

One have I marked, the happiest guest
In all this covert of the blest:
Hail to Thee, far above the rest
In joy of voice and pinion!
Thou, Linnet! in thy green array,
Presiding Spirit here to-day,
Dost lead the revels of the May;
And this is thy dominion.

While birds, and butterflies, and flowers,
Make all one band of paramours,
Thou, ranging up and down the bowers,
Art sole in thy employment:
A Life, a Presence like the Air,
Scattering thy gladness without care,
Too blest with any one to pair;
Thyself thy own enjoyment.

Amid yon tuft of hazel trees,
That twinkle to the gusty breeze,
Behold him perched in ecstasies,
Yet seeming still to hover;
There! where the flutter of his wings
Upon his back and body flings
Shadows and sunny glimmerings,
That cover him all over.

My dazzled sight he oft deceives,
A Brother of the dancing leaves;
Then flits, and from the cottage-eaves
Pours forth his song in gushes;
As if by that exulting strain
He mocked and treated with disdain
The voiceless Form he chose to feign,
While fluttering in the bushes.

XI.—TO A HIGHLAND GIRL.

(AT INVERSNEYDE, UPON LOCH LOMOND.)

1803.

SWEET Highland Girl, a very shower
Of beauty is thy earthly dower!
Twice seven consenting years have shed
Their utmost bounty on thy head:

And these grey rocks; that household lawn;
Those trees, a veil just half withdrawn;
This fall of water that doth make
A murmur near the silent lake;
This little bay; a quiet road
That holds in shelter thy Abode—
In truth together do ye seem
Like something fashioned in a dream;
Such Forms as from their covert peep
When earthly cares are laid asleep!
Yet dream and vision as thou art, [11]
I bless thee with a human heart;
God shield thee to thy latest years!
Thee, neither know I, nor thy peers;
And yet my eyes are filled with tears.

With earnest feeling I shall pray
For thee when I am far away:
For never saw I mien, or face,
In which more plainly I could trace
Benignity and home-bred sense
Ripening in perfect innocence.
Here scattered, like a random seed,
Remote from men, Thou dost not need
The embarrassed look of shy distress,
And maidenly shamefacedness:
Thou wear'st upon thy forehead clear
The freedom of a Mountaineer:
A face with gladness overspread!
Soft smiles, by human kindness bred:
And seemliness complete, that sways
Thy courtesies, about thee plays;
With no restraint, but such as springs
From quick and eager visitings

Of thoughts that lie beyond the reach
Of thy few words of English speech:
A bondage sweetly brooked, a strife
That gives thy gestures grace and life!
So have I, not unmoved in mind,
Seen birds of tempest-loving kind—
Thus beating up against the wind.

What hand but would a garland cull
For thee who art so beautiful?
O happy pleasure! here to dwell
Beside thee in some heathy dell;
Adopt your homely ways and dress,
A Shepherd, thou a Shepherdess!
But I could frame a wish for thee
More like a grave reality:
Thou art to me but as a wave
Of the wild sea; and I would have
Some claim upon thee, if I could,
Though but of common neighbourhood.
What joy to hear thee, and to see!
Thy elder Brother I would be,
Thy Father,—anything to thee!

Now thanks to Heaven! that of its grace
Hath led me to this lonely place.
Joy have I had; and going hence
I bear away my recompence.
In spots like these it is we prize
Our Memory, feel that she hath eyes:
Then, why should I be loth to stir?
I feel this place was made for her;
To give new pleasure like the past,
Continued long as life shall last.

Nor am I loth, though pleased at heart,
Sweet Highland Girl! from thee to part;
For I, methinks, till I grow old,
As fair before me shall behold
As I do now, the Cabin small,
The Lake, the Bay, the Waterfall;
And Thee, the Spirit of them all!

XII THE SOLITARY REAPER.

1803.

BEHOLD her, single in the field,
Yon solitary Highland Lass!
Reaping and singing by herself;
Stop here, or gently pass!
Alone she cuts and binds the grain,
And sings a melancholy strain;
O listen! for the Vale profound
Is overflowing with the sound.

No Nightingale did ever chaunt
So sweetly to reposing bands [12]
Of travellers in some shady haunt,
Among Arabian sands;
A voice so thrilling ne'er was heard
In spring-time from the Cuckoo-bird,
Breaking the silence of the seas
Among the farthest Hebrides.

Will no one tell me what she sings?—
Perhaps the plaintive numbers flow
For old, unhappy, far-off things,
And battles long ago:

Or is it some more humble lay,
Familiar matter of to-day?
Some natural sorrow, loss, or pain,
That has been, and may be again?

Whate'er the theme, the Maiden sang
As if her song could have no ending;
I saw her singing at her work,
And o'er the sickle bending;—
I listened, motionless and still;
And, as I mounted up the hill,
The music in my heart I bore,
Long after it was heard no more.

XIII.—YARROW UNVISITED.

1803.

FROM Stirling Castle we had seen
The mazy Forth unravelled;
Had trod the banks of Clyde, and Tay,
And with the Tweed had travelled;
And when we came to Clovenford,
Then said my '*winsome Marrow*,'
"Whate'er betide, we'll turn aside,
And see the Braes of Yarrow."

"Let Yarrow folk, *frae* Selkirk town,
Who have been buying, selling,
Go back to Yarrow, 'tis their own;
Each maiden to her dwelling!
On Yarrow's banks let herons feed,
Hares couch, and rabbits burrow!
But we will downward with the Tweed,
Nor turn aside to Yarrow.

"There's Gala Water, Leader Haughs,
Both lying right before us;
And Dryborough, where with chiming Tweed
The lintwhites sing in chorus;
There's pleasant Teviot-dale, a land
Made blithe with plough and harrow;
Why throw away a needful day
To go in search of Yarrow?

"What's Yarrow but a river bare,
That glides the dark hills under?
There are a thousand such elsewhere
As worthy of your wonder."
—Strange words they seemed of slight and scorn;
My True-love sighed for sorrow:
And looked me in the face, to think
I thus could speak of Yarrow!

"Oh! green," said I, "are Yarrow's Holms,
And sweet is Yarrow flowing!
Fair hangs the apple frae the rock,
But we will leave it growing.
O'er hilly path, and open Strath,
We'll wander Scotland thorough;
But, though so near, we will not turn
Into the dale of Yarrow.

"Let beeves and home-bred kine partake
The sweets of Burn-mill meadow;
The swan on still St. Mary's Lake
Float double, swan and shadow!
We will not see them; will not go,
To-day, nor yet to-morrow;
Enough if in our hearts we know
There's such a place as Yarrow.

"Be Yarrow stream unseen, unknown!
It must, or we shall rue it:
We have a vision of our own;
Ah! why should we undo it?
The treasured dreams of times long past,
We'll keep them, winsome Marrow!
For when we're there, although 'tis fair,
'Twill be another Yarrow!

"If Care with freezing years should come,
And wandering seem but folly,—
Should we be loth to stir from home,
And yet be melancholy;
Should life be dull, and spirits low,
'Twill soothe us in our sorrow,
That earth has something yet to show,
The bonny holms of Yarrow!"

XIV.—SHE WAS A PHANTOM.

1804.

SHE was a Phantom of delight
When first she gleamed upon my sight;
A lovely Apparition, sent
To be a moment's ornament;
Her eyes as stars of Twilight fair:
Like Twilight's, too, her dusky hair;
But all things else about her drawn
From May-time and the cheerful Dawn;
A dancing Shape, an Image gay,
To haunt, to startle, and way-lay.

I saw her upon nearer view,
A Spirit, yet a Woman too!
Her household motions light and free,
And steps of virgin liberty;
A countenance in which did meet
Sweet records, promises as sweet;
A Creature not too bright or good
For human nature's daily food;
For transient sorrows, simple wiles,
Praise, blame, love, kisses, tears, and smiles.

And now I see with eye serene
The very pulse of the machine;
A Being breathing thoughtful breath,
A Traveller between life and death;
The reason firm, the temperate will,
Endurance, foresight, strength, and skill;
A perfect Woman, nobly planned,
To warn, to comfort, and command;
And yet a Spirit still, and bright
With something of *an angel*[12] light.

XV.—I WANDERED LONELY.

1804.

I WANDERED lonely as a cloud
That floats on high o'er vales and hills,
When all at once I saw a crowd,
A host, of golden daffodils;
Beside the lake, beneath the trees,
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.

Continuous as the stars that shine
And twinkle on the milky way,
They stretched in never-ending line
Along the margin of a bay:
Ten thousand saw I at a glance,
Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.

The waves beside them danced; but they
Out-did the sparkling waves in glee:
A poet could not but be gay,
In such a jocund company:
I gazed—and gazed—but little thought
What wealth the show to me had brought:

For oft, when on my couch I lie
In vacant or in pensive mood,
They flash upon that inward eye
Which is the bliss of solitude;
And then my heart with pleasure fills,
And dances with the daffodils.

XVI.—TO THE CUCKOO.

I.

1802-4.

O BLITHE New-comer! I have heard,
I hear thee and rejoice.
O Cuckoo! shall I call thee Bird,
Or but a wandering Voice?

While I am lying on the grass
Thy twofold shout I hear;
From hill to hill it seems to pass,
At once far off, and near.

Though babbling only to the Vale,
Of sunshine and of flowers,
Thou bringest unto me a tale
Of visionary hours.

Thrice welcome, darling of the Spring!
Even yet thou art to me
No bird, but an invisible thing,
A voice, a mystery;

The same whom in my school-boy days
I listened to; that Cry
Which made me look a thousand ways
In bush, and tree, and sky.

To seek thee did I often rove
Through woods and on the green;
And thou wert still a hope, a love;
Still longed for, never seen.

And I can listen to thee yet;
Can lie upon the plain
And listen, till I do beget
That golden time again.

O blessed Bird! the earth we pace
Again appears to be
An unsubstantial, faery place;
That is fit home for Thee!

II.

1806.

YES, it was the mountain Echo,
Solitary, clear, profound,
Answering to the shouting Cuckoo,
Giving to her sound for sound!

Unsolicited reply
To a babbling wanderer sent;
Like her ordinary cry,
Like—but oh, how different!

Hears not also mortal Life?
Hear not we, unthinking Creatures!
Slaves of folly, love, or strife—
Voices of two different natures?

Have not *we* too?—yes, we have
Answers, and we know not whence;
Echoes from beyond the grave,
Recognised intelligence!

Often as thy inward ear
Catches such rebounds, beware—[14]
Listen, ponder, hold them dear;
For of God,—of God they are.

XVII.—TO THE NIGHTINGALE!

1806-7.

O NIGHTINGALE! thou surely art
A creature of a "fiery heart":—
These notes of thine—they pierce and pierce;
Tumultuous harmony and fierce!
Thou sing'st as if the God of wine
Had helped thee to a Valentine;
A song in mockery and despite
Of shades, and dews, and silent night;
And steady bliss, and all the loves
Now sleeping in these peaceful groves.

I heard a Stock-dove sing or say
His homely tale, this very day;
His voice was buried among trees,
Yet to be come-at by the breeze:
He did not cease; but cooed—and cooed;
And somewhat pensively he wooed:
He sang of love, with quiet blending,
Slow to begin, and never ending;
Of serious faith, and inward glee:
That was the song—the song for me!

XVIII.—TO A SKYLARK.

I.

1805.

UP with me! up with me into the clouds!
For thy song, Lark, is strong;
Up with me, up with me into the clouds!
Singing, singing,
With clouds and sky about thee ringing,
Lift me, guide me till I find
That spot which seems so to thy mind!
I have walked through wildernesses dreary,
And to-day my heart is weary;
Had I now the wings of a Faery,
Up to thee would I fly.
There's madness about thee, and joy divine
In that song of thine;
Lift me, guide me high and high
To thy banqueting-place in the sky.
Joyous as morning,
Thou art laughing and scorning;
Thou hast a nest for thy love and thy rest,
And, though little troubled with sloth,

Drunken Lark! thou would'st be loth
To be such a traveller as I.
Happy, happy Liver,
With a soul as strong as a mountain River
Pouring out praise to the Almighty Giver,
Joy and jollity be with us both!

Alas! my journey, rugged and uneven,
Through prickly moors or dusty ways must wind,
But hearing thee, or others of thy kind,
As full of gladness and as free of heaven,
I, with my fate contented, will plod on,
And hope for higher raptures, when Life's day is done.

II.

1825.

ETHEREAL minstrel! pilgrim of the sky!
Dost thou despise the earth where cares abound?
Or, while the wings aspire, are heart and eye
Both with thy nest upon the dewy ground?
Thy nest which thou canst drop into at will,
Those quivering wings composed, that music still!

To the last point of vision, and beyond,
Mount, daring Warbler! that love-prompted strain
('Twixt thee and thine a never-failing bond)
Thrills not the less the bosom of the plain:
Yet might'st thou seem, proud privilege! to sing
All independent of the leafy spring.[15]

Leave to the Nightingale her shady wood;
A privacy of glorious light is thine;
Whence thou dost pour upon the world a flood
Of harmony, with instinct more divine;
Type of the wise who soar, but never roam;
True to the kindred points of Heaven and Home.

NARRATIVE POEMS.

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

WE ARE SEVEN.

1798.

—— A SIMPLE Child,
That lightly draws its breath,
And feels its life in every limb,
What should it know of death?

I met a little cottage Girl:
She was eight years old, she said:
Her hair was thick with many a curl
That clustered round her head.

She had a rustic, woodland air,
And she was wildly clad:
Her eyes were fair, and very fair;
Her beauty made me glad.

"Sisters and brothers, little Maid,
How many may you be?"
"How many? Seven in all," she said,
And wondering looked at me.

"And where are they? I pray you tell."
She answered, "Seven are we;
And two of us at Conway dwell,
And two are gone to sea.

"Two of us in the church-yard lie,
My sister and my brother;
And, in the church-yard cottage, I
Dwell near them with my mother."

"You say that two at Conway dwell,
And two are gone to sea,
Yet ye are seven!—I pray you tell,
Sweet Maid, how this may be."

Then did the little Maid reply,
"Seven boys and girls are we;
Two of us in the church-yard lie,
Beneath the church-yard tree."

"You run about, my little Maid,
Your limbs they are alive;
If two are in the church-yard laid,
Then ye are only five."

"Their graves are green, they may be seen,"
The little Maid replied,
"Twelve steps or more from my mother's door,
And they are side by side.

My stockings there I often knit,
My kerchief there I hem;
And there upon the ground I sit—
I sit, and sing to them.[16]

"And often after sun-set, Sir,
When it is light and fair,
I take my little porringer,
And eat my supper there.

"The first that died was *little*[17] Jane;
In bed she moaning lay,
Till God released her of her pain;
And then she went away.

"So in the churchyard she was laid;
And, when the grass was dry,
Together round her grave we played,
My brother John and I.

"And when the ground was white with snow
And I could run and slide,
My brother John was forced to go,
And he lies by her side."

"How many are you then," said I,
"If they two are in heaven?"
Quick was the little Maid's reply,
"O Master! we are seven."

"But they are dead; those two are dead!
Their spirits are in heaven!"
'Twas throwing words away; for still
The little Maid would have her will
And said, "Nay, we are seven!"

LUCY GRAY; OR, SOLITUDE.

1799.

OFT I had heard of Lucy Gray;
And, when I crossed the wild,
I chanced to see at break of day
The solitary child.

No mate, no comrade Lucy knew;
She dwelt on a wide moor,
—The sweetest thing that ever grew
Beside a human door!

You yet may spy the fawn at play,
The hare upon the green;
But the sweet face of Lucy Gray
Will never more be seen.

"To-night will be a stormy night—
You to the town must go;
And take a lantern, Child, to light
Your mother through the snow."

"That, Father, will I gladly do:
'Tis scarcely afternoon—
The minster-clock has just struck two,
And yonder is the moon."

At this the Father raised his hook,
And snapped a faggot-band;
He plied his work;—and Lucy took
The lantern in her hand.

Not blither is the mountain roe:
With many a wanton stroke
Her feet disperse the powdery snow,
That rises up like smoke.

The storm came on before its time:
She wandered up and down;
And many a hill did Lucy climb;
But never reached the town.

The wretched parents all that night
Went shouting far and wide;
But there was neither sound nor sight
To serve them for a guide.

At day-break on a hill they stood
That over-looked the moor;
And thence they saw the bridge of wood,
A furlong from their door.

They wept,—and, turning homeward, cried,
"In heaven we all shall meet:"
—When in the snow the mother spied
The print of Lucy's feet.

Then downward from the steep hill's edge
They tracked the footmarks small;
And through the broken hawthorn hedge,
And by the long stone wall;

And then an open field they crossed:
The marks were still the same;
They tracked them on, nor ever lost;
And to the bridge they came.

They followed from the snowy bank
Those footmarks, one by one,
Into the middle of the plank;
—And further there were none!

—Yet some maintain that to this day
She is a living child;
That you may see sweet Lucy Gray
Upon the lonesome wild.

O'er rough and smooth she trips along,
And never looks behind;
And sings a solitary song
That whistles in the wind.

MICHAEL.

A PASTORAL POEM.

1800.

IF from the public way you turn your steps,
Up the tumultuous brook of Green-head Ghyll,
You will suppose that with an upright path
Your feet must struggle; in such bold ascent
The pastoral mountains front you, face to face.
But, courage! for around that boisterous brook
The mountains have all opened out themselves,
And made a hidden valley of their own.
No habitation can be seen; but they
Who journey thither find themselves alone
With a few sheep, with rocks and stones, and kites
That overhead are sailing in the sky.
It is in truth an utter solitude;
Nor should I have made mention of this Dell
But for one object which you might pass by,
Might see and notice not. Beside the brook
Appears a straggling heap of unhewn stones!
And to that place a story appertains,
Which, though it be ungarnished with events,
Is [18] not unfit, I deem, for the fireside,
Or for the summer shade. It was the first
Of those domestic tales that spake to me
Of Shepherds, dwellers in the valleys, men
Whom I already loved;—not verily
For their own sakes, but for the fields and hills
Where was their occupation and abode.
And hence this tale, while I was yet a Boy
Careless of books, yet having felt the power
Of Nature, by the gentle agency
Of natural objects, led me on to feel

For passions that were not my own, and think
(At random and imperfectly indeed)
On man, the heart of man, and human life.
Therefore, although it be a history
Homely and rude, I will relate the same
For the delight of a few natural hearts;
And, with yet fonder feeling, for the sake
Of youthful Poets, who among these hills
Will be my second self when I am gone.

Upon the forest-side in Grasmere Vale
There dwelt a Shepherd, Michael was his name;
An old man, stout of heart, and strong of limb.
His bodily frame had been from youth to age
Of an unusual strength: his mind was keen,
Intense, and frugal, apt for all affairs,
And in his shepherd's calling he was prompt
And watchful more than ordinary men.
Hence had he learned the meaning of all winds,
Of blasts of every tone; and, oftentimes,
When others heeded not, he heard the South
Make subterraneous music, like the noise
Of bagpipers on distant Highland hills.
The Shepherd, at such warning, of his flock
Bethought him, and he to himself would say,
"The winds are now devising work for me!"
And, truly, at all times, the storm, that drives
The traveller to a shelter, summoned him
Up to the mountains: he had been alone
Amid the heart of many thousand mists,
That came to him and left him on the heights.
So lived he till his eightieth year was past.
And grossly that man errs, who should suppose
That the green valleys, and the streams and rocks,

Were things indifferent to the Shepherd's thoughts.
Fields, where with cheerful spirits he had breathed
The common air; *the hills, which he so oft*
Had climbed with vigorous steps;[19] which had impressed
So many incidents upon his mind
Of hardship, skill or courage, joy or fear;
Which like a book, preserved the memory
Of the dumb animals, whom he had saved,
Had fed or sheltered, linking to such acts,
The certainty of honourable gain;
Those fields, those hills,—what could they less?—had laid
Strong hold on his affections, were to him
A pleasurable feeling of blind love,
The pleasure which there is in life itself.

His days had not been passed in singleness.
His Helpmate was a comely Matron, old—
Though younger than himself full twenty years.
She was a woman of a stirring life,
Whose heart was in her house: two wheels she had
Of antique form, this large for spinning wool,
That small for flax; and if one wheel had rest,
It was because the other was at work.
The Pair had but one inmate in their house,
An only Child, who had been born to them
When Michael, telling o'er his years, began
To deem that he was old,—in shepherd's phrase,
With one foot in the grave. This only Son,
With two brave sheep-dogs tried in many a storm,
The one of an inestimable worth,
Made all their household. I may truly say,
That they were as a proverb in the vale
For endless industry. When day was gone,

And from their occupations out of doors
The Son and Father were come home, even then
Their labour did not cease; unless when all
Turned to the cleanly supper-board, and there,
Each with a mess of pottage and skimmed milk,
Sat round the basket piled with oaten cakes,
And their plain home-made cheese. Yet when the meal
Was ended, Luke (for so the Son was named)
And his old Father both betook themselves
To such convenient work as might employ
Their hands by the fire-side; perhaps to card
Wool for the Housewife's spindle, or repair
Some injury done to sickle, flail, or scythe,
Or other implement of house or field.

Down from the ceiling, by the chimney's edge,
That in our ancient uncouth country style
Did with a huge projection overbrow[20]
Large space beneath, as duly as the light
Of day grew dim the Housewife hung a lamp;
An aged utensil, which had performed
Service beyond all others of its kind.
Early at evening did it burn—and late,
Surviving comrade of uncounted hours,
Which, going by from year to year, had found,
And left the couple neither gay perhaps
Nor cheerful, yet with objects and with hopes,
Living a life of eager industry.
And now, when Luke had reached his eighteenth year
There by the light of this old lamp they sate,
Father and Son, while far into the night
The Housewife plied her own peculiar work,
Making the cottage through the silent hours
Murmur as with the sound of summer flies.

This light was famous in its neighbourhood,
And was a public symbol of the life
That thrifty Pair had lived. For, as it chanced,
Their cottage on a plot of rising ground
Stood single, with large prospect, north and south,
High into Easedale, up to Dunmail-Raise,
And westward to the village near the lake;
And from this constant light, so regular
And so far seen, the House itself, by all
Who dwelt within the limits of the vale,
Both old and young, was named THE EVENING STAR.

Thus living on through such a length of years,
The Shepherd, if he loved himself, must needs
Have loved his Helpmate; but to Michael's heart
This son of his old age was yet more dear—
Less from instinctive tenderness, the same
Blind spirit, which is in the blood of all—[21]
Than that a child more than all other gifts
That earth can offer to declining man
Brings hope with it, and forward-looking thoughts,
And stirrings of inquietude, when they
By tendency of nature needs must fail.
Exceeding was the love he bare to him,
His Heart and his Heart's joy! For oftentimes
Old Michael, while he was a babe in arms,
Had done him female service, not alone
For pastime and delight, as is the use
Of fathers, but with patient mind enforced
To acts of tenderness; and he had rocked
His cradle [22] with a woman's gentle hand.

And, in a later time, ere yet the Boy
Had put on boy's attire, did Michael love,

Albeit of a stern unbending mind,
To have the young-one in his sight, when he
Wrought in the field, or on his shepherd's stool
Sate with a fettered sheep before him stretched
Under the large old oak, that near his door
Stood single, and, from matchless depth of shade,
Chosen for the Shearer's covert from the sun,
Thence in our rustic dialect was called
The CLIPPING TREE, a name which yet it bears.
There, while they two were sitting in the shade,
With others round them, earnest all and blithe,
Would Michael exercise his heart with looks
Of fond correction and reproof bestowed
Upon the Child, if he disturbed the sheep
By catching at their legs, or with his shouts
Scared them, while they lay still beneath the shears.

And when by Heaven's good grace the Boy grew up
A healthy Lad, and carried in his cheek
Two steady roses that were five years old,
Then Michael from a winter coppice cut
With his own hand a sapling, which he hooped
With iron, making it throughout in all
Due requisites a perfect shepherd's staff,
And gave it to the Boy; wherewith equipt
He as a watchman oftentimes was placed
At gate or gap, to stem or turn the flock;
And, to his office prematurely called,
There stood the urchin, as you will divine,
Something between a hindrance and a help;
And for this cause not always, I believe,
Receiving from his Father hire of praise;
Though nought was left undone which staff or voice,
Or looks, or threatening gestures, could perform.

But soon as Luke, full ten years old, could stand
Against the mountain blasts; and to the heights,
Not fearing toil, nor length of weary ways,
He with his Father daily went, and they
Were as companions, why should I relate
That objects which the Shepherd loved before
Were dearer now? that from the Boy there came
Feelings and emanations—things which were
Light to the sun and music to the wind;
And that the old Man's heart seemed born again?

Thus in his Father's sight the boy grew up;
And now, when he had reached his eighteenth year,
He was his comfort and his daily hope.

While in this sort the simple household lived
From day to day, to Michael's ear there came
Distressful tidings. Long before the time
Of which I speak, the Shepherd had been bound
In surety for his brother's son, a man
Of an industrious life, and ample means,—
But unforeseen misfortunes suddenly
Had prest upon him,—and old Michael now
Was summoned to discharge the forfeiture,
A grievous penalty, but little less
Than half his substance. This unlooked-for claim,
At the first hearing, for a moment took
More hope out of his life than he supposed
That any old man ever could have lost.
As soon as he had gathered so much strength
That he could look his trouble in the face,
It seemed that his sole refuge was to sell[23]
A portion of his patrimonial fields.
Such was his first resolve; he thought again,
And his heart failed him. "Isabel," said he,

Two evenings after he had heard the news,
"I have been toiling more than seventy years,
And in the open sunshine of God's love
Have we all lived; yet if these fields of ours
Should pass into a stranger's hand, I think
That I could not lie quiet in my grave.
Our lot is a hard lot; the sun himself
Has scarcely been more diligent than I;
And I have lived to be a fool at last
To my own family. An evil man
That was, and made an evil choice, if he
Were false to us; and if he were not false,
There are ten thousand to whom loss like this
Had been no sorrow. I forgive him;—but
'Twere better to be dumb than to talk thus.

When I began, my purpose was to speak
Of remedies and of a cheerful hope.
Our Luke shall leave us, Isabel; the land
Shall not go from us, and it shall be free;
He shall possess it, free as is the wind
That passes over it. We have, thou know'st,
Another kinsman—he will be our friend
In this distress. He is a prosperous man,
Thriving in trade—and Luke to him shall go,
And with his kinsman's help and his own thrift
He quickly will repair this loss, and then
May come again[24] to us. If here he stay,
What can be done? Where every one is poor,
What can be gained?"
At this the old Man paused,
And Isabel sat silent, for her mind
Was busy, looking back into past times.
There's Richard Bateman, thought she to herself,

He was a parish-boy—at the church-door
They made a gathering for him, shillings, pence,
And halfpennies, wherewith the neighbours bought
A basket, which they filled with pedlar's wares;
And, with this basket on his arm, the lad
Went up to London, found a master there,
Who, out of many, chose the trusty boy
To go and overlook his merchandise
Beyond the seas; where he grew wondrous rich,
And left estates and monies to the poor,
And, at his birth-place, built a chapel, floored
With marble, which he sent from foreign lands.
These thoughts, and many others of like sort,
Passed quickly through the mind of Isabel,
And her face brightened. The old Man was glad,
And thus resumed:—"Well, Isabel! this scheme
These two days has been meat and drink to me.
Far more than we have lost is left us yet.
—We have enough—I wish indeed that I
Were younger,—but this hope is a good hope.
—Make ready Luke's best garments, of the best
Buy for him more, and let us send him forth
To-morrow, or the next day, or to-night:
—If he *could* go, the Boy should go to-night."

Here Michael ceased, and to the fields went forth
With a light heart. The Housewife for five days
Was restless morn and night, and all day long
Wrought on with her best fingers to prepare
Things needful for the journey of her son.
But Isabel was glad when Sunday came
To stop her in her work: for, when she lay
By Michael's side, she through the two last nights
Heard him, how he was troubled in his sleep:

And when they rose at morning she could see
That all his hopes were gone. That day at noon
She said to Luke, while they two by themselves
Were sitting at the door, "Thou must not go:
We have no other Child but thee to lose,
None to remember—do not go away,
For if thou leave thy Father he will die."
The Youth made answer with a jocund voice;
And Isabel, when she had told her fears,
Recovered heart. That evening her best fare
Did she bring forth, and all together sat
Like happy people round a Christmas fire.

With daylight Isabel resumed her work;
And all the ensuing week the house appeared
As cheerful as a grove in Spring: at length
The expected letter from their kinsman came,
With kind assurances that he would do
His utmost for the welfare of the boy;
To which, requests were added, that forthwith
He might be sent to him. Ten times or more
The letter was read over; Isabel
Went forth to show it to the neighbours round;
Nor was there at that time on English land
A prouder heart than Luke's. When Isabel
Had to her house returned, the old Man said,
"He shall depart to-morrow." To this word
The Housewife answered, talking much of things
Which, if at such short notice he should go,
Would surely be forgotten. But at length
She gave consent, and Michael was at ease.

Near the tumultuous brook of Green-head Ghyll,
In that deep valley, Michael had designed
To build a Sheep-fold; and, before he heard

The tidings of his melancholy loss,
For this same purpose he had gathered up
A heap of stones, which by the streamlet's edge
Lay thrown together, ready for the work.
With Luke that evening thitherward he walked;
And soon as they had reached the place he stopped,
And thus the old Man spake to him:—"My Son,
To-morrow thou wilt leave me: with full heart
I look upon thee, for thou art the same
That wert a promise to me ere thy birth,
And all thy life hast been my daily joy.
I will relate to thee some little part
Of our two histories; 'twill do thee good
When thou art from me, even if I should *speak*
Of[25] things thou canst not know of.——After thou
First cam'st into the world—as oft befalls
To new-born infants—thou didst sleep away
Two days, and blessings from thy Father's tongue
Then fell upon thee. Day by day passed on,
And still I loved thee with increasing love.
Never to living ear came sweeter sounds
Than when I heard thee by our own fireside
First uttering, without words, a natural tune;
While thou, a feeding babe, didst in thy joy
Sing at thy Mother's breast. Month followed month,
And in the open fields my life was passed
And on the mountains; else I think that thou
Hadst been brought up upon thy Father's knees.
But we were playmates, Luke: among these hills,
As well thou knowest, in us the old and young
Have played together, nor with me didst thou
Lack any pleasure which a boy can know."
Luke had a manly heart; but at these words
He sobbed aloud. The old Man grasped his hand,

And said, "Nay, do not take it so—I see
That these are things of which I need not speak.
—Even to the utmost I have been to thee
A kind and a good Father: and herein
I but repay a gift which I myself
Received at others' hands; for, though now old
Beyond the common life of man, I still
Remember them who loved me in my youth.
Both of them sleep together: here they lived
As all their Forefathers had done; and when
At length their time was come, they were not loth
To give their bodies to the family mould.
I wished that thou shouldst live the life they lived.
But, 'tis a long time to look back, my Son,
And see so little gain from threescore years.
These fields were burthened when they came to me;
Till I was forty years of age, not more
Than half of my inheritance was mine.
I toiled and toiled; God blessed me in my work,
And till these three weeks past the land was free.
—It looks as if it never could endure
Another Master. Heaven forgive me, Luke,
If I judge ill for thee, but it seems good
That thou shouldst go."

At this the old Man paused;
Then, pointing to the Stones near which they stood,
Thus, after a short silence, he resumed:
"This was a work for us; and now, my Son,
It is a work for me. But, lay one stone—
Here, lay it for me, Luke, with thine own hands.
Nay, Boy, be of good hope;—we both may live
To see a better day. At eighty-four
I still am strong and hale;—do thou thy part;
I will do mine.—I will begin again

With many tasks that were resigned to thee:
Up to the heights, and in among the storms,
Will I without thee go again, and do
All works which I was wont to do alone,
Before I knew thy face.—Heaven bless thee, Boy!
Thy heart these two weeks has been beating fast
With many hopes.—It should be so—yes—yes—
I knew that thou couldst never have a wish
To leave me, Luke: thou hast been bound to me
Only by links of love: when thou art gone,
What will be left to us!—But, I forget
My purposes. Lay now the corner-stone,
As I requested; and hereafter, Luke,
When thou art gone away, should evil men
Be thy companions, think of me, my Son,
And of this moment; hither turn thy thoughts,
And God will strengthen thee: amid all fear
And all temptation, Luke, I pray that thou
Mayst bear in mind the life thy Fathers lived,
Who, being innocent, did for that cause
Bestir them in good deeds. Now, fare thee well—
When thou return'st, thou in this place wilt see
A work which is not here: a covenant
'Twill be between us; but, whatever fate
Befall thee, I shall love thee to the last,
And bear thy memory with me to the grave."

The Shepherd ended here; and Luke stooped down,
And, as his Father had requested, laid
The first stone of the Sheep-fold. At the sight
The old Man's grief broke from him; to his heart
He pressed his Son, he kissèd him and wept;
And to the house together they returned.
—Hushed was that House in peace, or seeming peace,

Ere the night fell:—with morrow's dawn the Boy
Began his journey, and when he had reached
The public way, he put on a bold face;
And all the neighbours as he passed their doors
Came forth with wishes and with farewell prayers,
That followed him till he was out of sight.

A good report did from their Kinsman come,
Of Luke and his well-doing: and the Boy
Wrote loving letters, full of wondrous news,
Which, as the Housewife phrased it, were throughout
"The prettiest letters that were ever seen."
Both parents read them with rejoicing hearts.
So, many months passed on: and once again
The Shepherd went about his daily work
With confident and cheerful thoughts; and now
Sometimes when he could find a leisure hour
He to that valley took his way, and there
Wrought at the Sheep-fold. Meantime Luke began
To slacken in his duty; and at length
He in the dissolute city gave himself
To evil courses: ignominy and shame
Fell on him, so that he was driven at last
To seek a hiding-place beyond the seas.

There is a comfort in the strength of love:
'Twill make a thing endurable, which else
Would overset the brain, or break the heart;
I have conversed with more than one who well
Remember the old Man, and what he was
Years after he had heard this heavy news.
His bodily frame had been from youth to age
Of an unusual strength. Among the rocks
He went, and still looked up to sun and cloud,

And listened to the wind; and, as before,
Performed all kinds of labour for his sheep,
And for the land his small inheritance.
And to that hollow dell from time to time
Did he repair, to build the fold of which
His flock had need. 'Tis not forgotten yet
The pity which was then in every heart
For the old Man—and 'tis believed by all
That many and many a day he thither went,
And never lifted up a single stone.

There, by the Sheep-fold, sometimes was he seen
Sitting alone, or with his faithful Dog,
Then old, beside him, lying at his feet.
The length of full seven years, from time to time
He at the building of this Sheep-fold wrought,
And left the work unfinished when he died.
Three years, or little more, did Isabel
Survive her husband: at her death the estate
Was sold, and went into a stranger's hand.
The cottage which was named the Evening Star
Is gone—the ploughshare has been through the ground
On which it stood; great changes have been wrought
In all the neighbourhood:—yet the oak is left
That grew beside their door; and the remains
Of the unfinished Sheep-fold may be seen
Beside the boisterous brook of Green-head Ghyll.

RESOLUTION AND INDEPENDENCE;
OR, THE LEECH-GATHERER.

1802.

THERE was a roaring in the wind all night;
The rain came heavily and fell in floods;
But now the sun is rising calm and bright;
The birds are singing in the distant woods;
Over his own sweet voice the Stock-dove broods;
The Jay makes answer as the Magpie chatters;
And all the air is filled with pleasant noise of waters.

All things that love the sun are out of doors;
The sky rejoices in the morning's birth;
The grass is bright with rain-drops;—on the moors
The hare is running races in her mirth;
And with her feet she from the plashy earth
Raises a mist, that, glittering in the sun,
Runs with her all the way, wherever she doth run.

I was a Traveller then upon the moor;
I saw the hare that raced about with joy;
I heard the woods and distant waters roar;
Or heard them not, as happy as a boy:
The pleasant season did my heart employ:
My old remembrances went from me wholly;
And all the ways of men, so vain and melancholy!

But, as it sometimes chanceth, from the might
Of joy in minds that can no further go,
As high as we have mounted in delight
In our dejection do we sink as low;
To me that morning did it happen so;
And fears, and fancies, thick upon me came:
Dim sadness—and blind thoughts, I knew not, nor could nam

I heard the skylark warbling in the sky;
And I bethought me of the playful hare;
Even such a happy Child of earth am I;
Even as these blissful creatures do I fare;
Far from the world I walk, and from all care;
But there may come another day to me—
Solitude, pain of heart, distress, and poverty.

My whole life I have lived in pleasant thought,
As if life's business were a summer mood;
As if all needful things would come unsought
To genial faith, still rich in genial good;
But how can He expect that others should
Build for him, sow for him, and at his call
Love him, who for himself will take no heed at all?

I thought of Chatterton, the marvellous Boy,
The sleepless Soul that perished in his pride;
Of Him who walked in glory and in joy
Following his plough, along the mountain-side:
By our own spirits are we deified:
We poets in our youth begin in gladness;
But thereof come in the end despondency and madness.

Now, whether it were by peculiar grace,
A leading from above, a something given,
Yet it befell that, in this lonely place,
When I with these untoward thoughts had striven,
Beside a pool bare to the eye of heaven
I saw a Man before me unawares:
The oldest man he seemed that ever wore grey hairs.

As a huge stone is sometimes seen to lie
Couched on the bald top of an eminence;
Wonder to all who do the same espy,
By what means it could thither come, and whence;
So that it seems a thing endued with sense:
Like a sea-beast crawled forth, that on a shelf
Of rock or sand reposeth, there to sun itself;

Such seemed this Man, not all alive nor dead,
Nor all asleep—in his extreme old age:
His body was bent double, feet and head
Coming together in life's pilgrimage;
As if some dire constraint of pain, or rage
Of sickness felt by him in times long past,
A more than human weight upon his frame had cast.

Himself he propped, *his body, limbs, and face,*[26]
Upon a long grey staff of shaven wood:
And, still as I drew near with gentle pace,
Upon the margin of that moorish flood
Motionless as a cloud the old Man stood,
That heareth not the loud winds when they call;
And moveth altogether, if it move at all.

At length, himself unsettling, he the pond
Stirred with his staff, and fixedly did look
Upon the muddy water, which he conned,
As if he had been reading in a book:
And now a stranger's privilege I took;
And, drawing to his side, to him did say,
"This morning gives us promise of a glorious day."

A gentle answer did the old Man make,
In courteous speech which forth he slowly drew:
And him with further words I thus bespake,
"What occupation do you there pursue?
This is a lonesome place for one like you."
He answered, while[27] a flash of mild surprise
Broke from the sable orbs of his yet-vivid eyes.

His words came feebly, from a feeble chest,
But each in solemn order followed each,
With something of a lofty utterance drest—
Choice word and measured phrase, above the reach
Of ordinary men; a stately speech;
Such as grave Livers do in Scotland use,
Religious men, who give to God and man their dues.

He told, that to these waters he had come
To gather leeches, being old and poor:
Employment hazardous and wearisome!
And he had many hardships to endure:
From pond to pond he roamed, from moor to moor;
Housing, with God's good help, by choice or chance;
And in this way he gained an honest maintenance.

The old Man still stood talking by my side;
But now his voice to me was like a stream
Scarce heard; nor word from word could I divide;
And the whole body of the Man did seem
Like one whom I had met with in a dream;
Or like a man from some far region sent,
To give me human strength, by apt admonishment.

My former thoughts returned: the fear that kills;
And hope that is unwilling to be fed;
Cold, pain, and labour, and all fleshly ills;
And mighty Poets in their misery dead.
—Perplexed, and longing to be comforted,
My question eagerly did I renew,
"How is it that you live, and what is it you do?"

He with a smile did then his words repeat;
And said, that, gathering leeches, far and wide
He travelled; stirring thus about his feet
The waters of the pools where they abide.
"Once I could meet with them on every side;
But they have dwindled long by slow decay;
Yet still I persevere, and find them where I may."

While he was talking thus, the lonely place,
The old Man's shape, and speech—all troubled me.
In my mind's eye I seemed to see him pace
About the weary moors continually,
Wandering about alone and silently.
While I these thoughts within myself pursued,
He, having made a pause, the same discourse renewed.

And soon with this he other matter blended,
Cheerfully uttered, with demeanour kind,
But stately in the main; and when he ended,
I could have laughed myself to scorn to find
In that decrepit Man so firm a mind.
"God," said I, "be my help and stay secure;
I'll think of the Leech-gatherer on the lonely moor!"

ODES, ETC.

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

ODE ON INTIMATIONS OF IMMORTALITY.

FROM RECOLLECTIONS OF EARLY CHILDHOOD.

1803—1806.

"The Child is Father of the Man;
And I could wish my days to be
Bound each to each by natural piety."

I.

THERE was a time when meadow, grove, and stream,
The earth, and every common sight,
To me did seem
Apparelled in celestial light,
The glory and the freshness of a dream.
It is not now as it hath been of yore;—
Turn wheresoe'er I may,
By night or day,
The things which I have seen I now can see no more.

II.

The Rainbow comes and goes,
And lovely is the Rose;
The Moon doth with delight
Look round her when the heavens are bare;
Waters on a starry night
Are beautiful and fair;
The sunshine is a glorious birth;
But yet I know, where'er I go,
That there hath passed away a glory from the earth.

III.

Now, while the birds thus sing a joyous song,
And while the young lambs bound
As to the tabor's sound,
To me alone there came a thought of grief:
A timely utterance gave that thought relief,
And I again am strong:
The cataracts blow their trumpets from the steep;
No more shall grief of mine the season wrong;
I hear the Echoes through the mountains throng,
The Winds come to me from the fields of sleep,
And all the earth is gay;
Land and sea
Give themselves up to jollity,
And with the heart of May
Doth every Beast keep holiday;—
Thou Child of Joy,
Shout round me, let me hear thy shouts, thou happy
Shepherd-boy!

IV.

Ye blessed Creatures, I have heard the call
Ye to each other make; I see
The heavens laugh with you in your jubilee;
My heart is at your festival,
My head hath its coronal,
The fulness of your bliss, I feel—I feel it all.
Oh evil day! if I were sullen
While Earth herself is adorning,
This sweet May-morning,
And the Children are culling,
On every side,
In a thousand valleys far and wide,
Fresh flowers; while the sun shines warm,

And the Babe leaps up on his Mother's arm :—
I hear, I hear, with joy I hear!
—But there's a Tree, of many, one,
A single Field which I have looked upon,
Both of them speak of something that is gone :
The Pansy at my feet
Doth the same tale repeat:
Whither is fled the visionary gleam?
Where is it now, the glory and the dream?

V.

Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting:
The Soul that rises with us, our life's Star,
Hath had elsewhere its setting,
And cometh from afar:
Not in entire forgetfulness,
And not in utter nakedness,
But trailing clouds of glory do we come
From God, who is our home:
Heaven lies about us in our infancy!
Shades of the prison-house begin to close
Upon the growing Boy,
But he beholds the light, and whence it flows,
He sees it in his joy;
The Youth, who daily farther from the east
Must travel, still is Nature's Priest,
And by the vision splendid
Is on his way attended;
At length the Man perceives it die away,
And fade into the light of common day.

VI.

Earth fills her lap with pleasures of her own;
Yearnings she hath in her own natural kind,

And, even with something of a Mother's mind,
And no unworthy aim,
The homely Nurse doth all she can
To make her Foster-child, her Inmate Man,
Forget the glories he hath known,
And that imperial palace whence he came.

VII.

Behold the Child among his new-born blisses,
A six-years' Darling of a pigmy size!
See, where 'mid work of his own hand he lies,
Fretted by sallies of his mother's kisses,
With light upon him from his father's eyes!
See, at his feet, some little plan or chart,
Some fragment from his dream of human life,
Shaped by himself with newly-learnèd art;
A wedding or a festival,
A mourning or a funeral;
And this hath now his heart,
And unto this he frames his song:
Then will he fit his tongue
To dialogues of business, love, or strife:
But it will not be long
Ere this be thrown aside,
And with new joy and pride
The little Actor cons another part;
Filling from time to time his "humorous stage"
With all the Persons, down to palsied Age,
That Life brings with her in her equipage;
As if his whole vocation
Were endless imitation.

VIII.

Thou, whose exterior semblance doth belie

Thy Soul's immensity;
Thou best Philosopher, who yet dost keep
Thy heritage, thou Eye among the blind,
That, deaf and silent, read'st the eternal deep,
Haunted for ever by the eternal mind,—
Mighty Prophet! Seer blest!
On whom those truths do rest;
Which we are toiling all our lives to find,
In darkness lost, the darkness of the grave;
Thou, over whom thy Immortality
Broods like the Day, a Master o'er a Slave,
A Presence which is not to be put by;
Thou little Child, yet glorious in the might
Of heaven-born freedom on thy being's height,
Why with such earnest pains dost thou provoke
The years to bring the inevitable yoke,
Thus blindly with thy blessedness at strife?
Full soon thy Soul shall have her earthly freight,
And custom lie upon thee with a weight,
Heavy as frost, and deep almost as life!

IX.

O joy! that in our embers
Is something that doth live,
That nature yet remembers
What was so fugitive!
The thought of our past years in me doth breed
Perpetual benediction: not indeed
For that which is most worthy to be blest;
Delight and liberty, the simple creed
Of Childhood, whether busy or at rest,
With new-fledged hope still fluttering in his breast:—
Not for these I raise
The song of thanks and praise;

But for those obstinate questionings
Of sense and outward things,
Fallings from us, vanishings;
Blank misgivings of a Creature
Moving about in worlds not realised,
High instincts before which our mortal Nature
Did tremble like a guilty Thing surprised:
But for those first affections,
Those shadowy recollections,
Which, be they what they may,
Are yet the fountain light of all our day,
Are yet a master light of all our seeing;
Uphold us, cherish, and have power to make
Our noisy years seem moments in the being
Of the eternal Silence: truths that wake,
To perish never;
Which neither listlessness, nor mad endeavour,
Nor Man nor Boy,
Nor all that is at enmity with joy,
Can utterly abolish or destroy!
Hence, in a season of calm weather,
Though inland far we be,
Our Souls have sight of that immortal sea
Which brought us hither,
Can in a moment travel thither.
And see the Children sport upon the shore,
And hear the mighty waters rolling evermore.

X.

Then sing, ye Birds, sing, sing a joyous song!
And let the young Lambs bound
As to the tabor's sound!
We in thought will join your throng,
Ye that pipe and ye that play,

Ye that through your hearts to-day
Feel the gladness of the May!
What though the radiance which was once so bright
Be now for ever taken from my sight,
Though nothing can bring back the hour
Of splendour in the grass, of glory in the flower;
We will grieve not, rather find
Strength in what remains behind;
In the primal sympathy
Which having been must ever be,
In the soothing thoughts that spring
Out of human suffering,
In the faith that looks through death,
In years that bring the philosophic mind.

XI.

And O, ye Fountains, Meadows, Hills, and Groves,
Forbode not any severing of our loves!
Yet in my heart of hearts I feel your might;
I only have relinquished one delight
To live beneath your more habitual sway.
I love the Brooks which down their channels fret,
Even more than when I tripped lightly as they;
The innocent brightness of a new-born Day
Is lovely yet;
The Clouds that gather round the setting sun
Do take a sober colouring from an eye
That hath kept watch o'er man's mortality;
Another race hath been, and other palms are won.
Thanks to the human heart by which we live,
Thanks to its tenderness, its joys, and fears,
To me the meanest flower that blows can give
Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears.

ODE TO DUTY.

1805.

STERN Daughter of the Voice of God!
O Duty! if that name thou love
Who art a light to guide, a rod
To check the erring, and reprove;
Thou, who art victory and law
When empty terrors overawe;
From vain temptations dost set free;
And calm'st the weary strife of frail humanity!

There are who ask not if thine eye
Be on them; who, in love and truth,
Where no misgiving is, rely
Upon the genial sense of youth:
Glad Hearts! without reproach or blot;
Who do thy work, and know it not:
Long may the kindly impulse last!
And Thou, if they should totter, teach them to stand fast![2]

Serene will be our days and bright,
And happy will our nature be,
When love is an unerring light,
And joy its own security.
And they a blissful course may hold
Even now, who, not unwisely bold,
Live in the spirit of this creed;
Yet seek thy firm support, according to their need.

I, loving freedom, and untried;
No sport of every random gust,
Yet being to myself a guide,

Too blindly have reposed my trust:
And oft, when in my heart was heard
Thy timely mandate, I deferred
The task, in smoother walks to stray;
But thee I now would serve more strictly, if I may.

Through no disturbance of my soul,
Or strong compunction in me wrought,
I supplicate for thy control;
But in the quietness of thought:
Me this unchartered freedom tires;
I feel the weight of chance-desires:
My hopes no more must change their name,
I long for a repose that ever is the same.

Stern Lawgiver! yet thou dost wear
The Godhead's most benignant grace;
Nor know we anything so fair
As is the smile upon thy face:
Flowers laugh before thee on their beds,
And fragrance in thy footing treads;
Thou dost preserve the stars from wrong;
And the most ancient heavens, through Thee, are
fresh and strong.

To humbler functions, awful Power!
I call thee: I myself commend
Unto thy guidance from this hour;
Oh, let my weakness have an end!
Give unto me, made lowly wise,
The spirit of self-sacrifice;
The confidence of reason give;
And in the light of truth thy Bondman let me live!

CHARACTER OF THE HAPPY WARRIOR.

1806.

WHO is the happy Warrior? Who is he
That every man in arms should wish to be?
—It is the generous Spirit, who, when brought
Among the tasks of real life, hath wrought
Upon the plan that pleased his boyish thought:
Whose high endeavours are an inward light
That makes the path before him always bright:
Who, with a natural instinct to discern
What knowledge can perform, is diligent to learn;
Abides by this resolve, and stops not there,
But makes his moral being his prime care:
Who, doomed to go in company with Pain,
And Fear, and Bloodshed, miserable train!
Turns his necessity to glorious gain;
In face of these doth exercise a power
Which is our human nature's highest dower;
Controls them and subdues, transmutes, bereaves
Of their bad influence, and their good receives:
By objects, which might force the soul to abate
Her feeling, rendered more compassionate;
Is placable—because occasions rise
So often that demand such sacrifice;
More skilful in self-knowledge, even more pure,
As tempted more; more able to endure,
As more exposed to suffering and distress;
Thence, also, more alive to tenderness.
—'Tis he whose law is reason; who depends
Upon that law as on the best of friends;

Whence, in a state where men are tempted still
To evil for a guard against worse ill,
And what in quality or act is best
Doth seldom on a right foundation rest,
He labours good on good to fix, and owes
To virtue every triumph that he knows:
—Who, if he rise to station of command,
Rises by open means; and there will stand
On honourable terms, or else retire,
And in himself possess his own desire;
Who comprehends his trust, and to the same
Keeps faithful with a singleness of aim;
And therefore does not stoop, nor lie in wait
For wealth, or honours, or for worldly state:
Whom they must follow; on whose head must fall
Like showers of manna, if they come at all:
Whose powers shed round him in the common strife,
Or mild concerns of ordinary life,
A constant influence, a peculiar grace;
But who, if he be called upon to face
Some awful moment to which Heaven has joined
Great issues, good or bad for human kind,
Is happy as a Lover; and attired
With sudden brightness, like a Man inspired;
And, through the heat of conflict, keeps the law
In calmness made, and sees what he foresaw;
Or if an unexpected call succeed,
Come when it will, is equal to the need:
—He who, though thus endued as with a sense
And faculty for storm and turbulence,
Is yet a Soul whose master-bias leans
To homefelt pleasures and to gentle scenes;
Sweet images! which, wheresoe'er he be,
Are at his heart; and such fidelity

It is his darling passion to approve;
More brave for this, that he hath much to love:—
'Tis, finally, the Man, who, lifted high
Conspicuous object in a Nation's eye,
Or left unthought-of in obscurity,—
Who, with a toward or untoward lot,
Prosperous or adverse, to his wish or not,—
Plays, in the many games of life, that one
Where what he most doth value must be won:
Whom neither shape of danger can dismay,
Nor thought of tender happiness betray;
Who, not content that former worth stand fast,
Looks forward, persevering to the last,
From well to better, daily self-surpast:
Who, whether praise of him must walk the earth
For ever, and to noble deeds give birth,
Or he must *go to dust*[29] without his fame,
And leave a dead unprofitable name,—
Finds comfort in himself and in his cause;
And, while the mortal mist is gathering, draws
His breath in confidence of Heaven's applause:
This is the happy Warrior; this is He
Whom[30] every Man in arms should wish to be.

LAODAMIA.

1814.

"WITH sacrifice, before the rising morn
Performed, my slaughtered Lord have I required;
And in thick darkness, amid shades forlorn,
Him of the infernal Gods have I desired:[31]
Celestial pity I again implore;—
Restore him to my sight—great Jove, restore!"

So speaking, and by fervent love endowed
With faith, the Suppliant heavenward lifts her hands;
While, like the sun emerging from a cloud,
Her countenance brightens, and her eye expands;
Her bosom heaves and spreads, her stature grows;
And she expects the issue in repose.

O terror! what hath she perceived?—O joy!
What doth she look on?—whom doth she behold?
Her Hero slain upon the beach of Troy?
His vital presence—his corporeal mould?
It is—if sense deceive her not—'tis He!
And a God leads him—wingèd Mercury!

Mild Hermes spake—and touched her with his wand
That calms all fear: "Such grace hath crowned thy prayer,
Laodamia! that at Jove's command
Thy Husband walks the paths of upper air:
He comes to tarry with thee three hours' space;
Accept the gift,—behold him face to face!"

Forth sprang the impassioned Queen her Lord to clasp;
Again that consummation she essayed;
But unsubstantial Form eludes her grasp
As often as that eager grasp was made.
The Phantom parts—but parts to re-unite,
And re-assume his place before her sight.

"Protesiláus, lo! thy guide is gone!
Confirm, I pray, the vision with thy voice:
This is our palace,—yonder is thy throne:
Speak, and the floor thou tread'st on will rejoice.
Not to appal me have the gods bestowed
This precious boon;—and blessed a sad abode."

"Great Jove, Laodamia! doth not leave
His gifts imperfect:—Spectre though I be,
I am not sent to scare thee or deceive;
But in reward of thy fidelity.
And something also did my worth obtain;
For fearless virtue bringeth boundless gain.

"Thou know'st, the Delphic oracle foretold
That the first Greek who touched the Trojan strand
Should die; but me the threat could not withhold:
A generous cause a victim did demand;
And forth I leapt upon the sandy plain;
A self-devoted chief—by Hector slain."

"Supreme of Heroes—bravest, noblest, best!
Thy matchless courage I bewail no more,
Which then, when tens of thousands were deprest
By doubt, propelled thee to the fatal shore;
Thou found'st—and I forgive thee—here thou art—
A nobler counsellor than my poor heart.

"But thou, though capable of sternest deed,
Wert kind as resolute, and good as brave;
And he, whose power restores thee, hath decreed
That thou should'st *cheat*[32] the malice of the grave;
Redundant are thy locks, thy lips as fair
As when their breath enriched Thessalian air.

"No Spectre greets me,—no vain Shadow this:
Come, blooming Hero, place thee by my side!
Give, on this well-known couch, one nuptial kiss
To me, this day a second time thy bride!"
Jove frowned in heaven; the conscious Parcæ threw
Upon those roseate lips a Stygian hue.

"This visage tells thee that my doom is past:
Know, virtue were not virtue[33] if the joys
Of sense were able to return as fast
And surely as they vanish. Earth destroys
Those raptures duly—Erebus disdains:
Calm pleasures there abide—majestic pains.

"Be taught, O faithful Consort, to control
Rebellious passion; for the Gods approve
The depth, and not the tumult, of the soul;
A fervent, not ungovernable love.
Thy transports moderate; and meekly mourn
When I depart, for brief is my sojourn."—

"Ah, wherefore?—Did not Hercules by force
Wrest from the guardian Monster of the tomb
Alcestis, a reanimated corse,
Given back to dwell on earth in vernal bloom?
Medea's spells dispersed the weight of years,
And Æson stood a youth 'mid youthful peers.

"The Gods to us are merciful—and they
Yet further may relent: for mightier far
Than strength of nerve and sinew, or the sway
Of magic potent over sun and star,
Is love, though oft to agony distressed,
And though his favourite seat be feeble woman's breast.

"But if thou goest I follow—" "Peace!" he said—
She looked upon him and was calmed and cheered;
The ghastly colour from his lips had fled:
In his deportment, shape, and mien, appeared
Elysian beauty,—melancholy grace,—
Brought from a pensive, though a happy place.

He spake of love, such love as Spirits feel
In worlds whose course is equable and pure;
No fears to beat away—no strife to heal—
The past unsigh'd for, and the future sure;
Spake of heroic arts in graver mood
Revived, with finer harmony pursued;

Of all that is most beauteous—imaged there
In happier beauty; more pellucid streams,
An ampler ether, a diviner air,
And fields invested with purpureal gleams;
Climes which the sun, who sheds the brightest day
Earth knows, is all unworthy to survey.

Yet there the Soul shall enter which hath earned
That privilege by virtue.—"Ill," said he,
"The end of man's existence I discerned,
Who from ignoble games and revelry
Could draw, when we had parted, vain delight,
While tears were thy best pastime, day and night;

"And while my youthful peers, before my eyes
(Each hero following his peculiar bent),
Prepared themselves for glorious enterprise
By martial sports,—or, seated in the tent,
Chieftains and kings in council were detained;
What time the fleet of Aulis lay enchained.

"The wished-for wind was given:—I then revolved
The oracle, upon the silent sea;
And, if no worthier led the way, resolved
That, of a thousand vessels, mine should be
The foremost prow in pressing to the strand,
Mine the first blood that tinged the Trojan sand.

"Yet bitter, oft-times bitter, was the pang
When of thy loss I thought, beloved Wife!
On thee too fondly did my memory hang,
And on the joys we shared in mortal life,—
The paths which we had trod—these fountains, flowers;
My new-planned cities and unfinished towers.

"But should suspense permit the Foe to cry,
'Behold, they tremble!—haughty their array,
Yet of their number no one dares to die!'
In soul I swept the indignity away:
Old frailties then recurred:—but lofty thought,
In act embodied, my deliverance wrought.

"And Thou, though strong in love, art all too weak
In reason, in self-government too slow;
I counsel thee by fortitude to seek
Our blest re-union in the shades below.
The invisible world with thee hath sympathised;
Be thy affections raised and solemnised.

"Learn by a mortal yearning to ascend—
Seeking a higher object. Love was given,
Encouraged, sanctioned, chiefly for that end:
For this the passion to excess was driven—
That self might be annulled: her bondage prove
The fetters of a dream, opposed to love."—

Aloud she shrieked! for Hermes re-appears!
Round the dear Shade she would have clung—'tis vain:
The hours are past—too brief had they been years;
And him no mortal effort can detain:
Swift, toward the realms that know not earthly day,
He through the portal takes his silent way,
And on the palace-floor a lifeless corse she lay.

Ah, judge her gently, who so deeply loved!
Her, who in reason's spite, yet without crime,
Was in a trance of passion thus removed;
Delivered from the galling yoke of time,
And these frail elements—to gather flowers
Of blissful quiet 'mid unfading bowers.[34]

—Yet tears to human suffering are due;
And mortal hopes defeated and o'erthrown
Are mourned by man, and not by man alone,
As fondly he believes.—Upon the side
Of Hellespont (such faith was entertained)
A knot of spiry trees for ages grew
From out the tomb of him for whom she died;
And ever, when such stature they had gained
That Ilium's walls were subject to their view,
The trees' tall summits withered at the sight;
A constant interchange of growth and blight!

REFLECTIVE AND DESCRIPTIVE.

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

LINES,

COMPOSED A FEW MILES ABOVE TINTERN ABBEY, ON REVISITING THE BANKS OF THE WYE DURING A TOUR,

JULY 13TH, 1798.

FIVE years have passed; five summers, with the length
Of five long winters! and again I hear
These waters, rolling from their mountain-springs
With a soft inland murmur. Once again
Do I behold these steep and lofty cliffs,
That on a wild secluded scene impress
Thoughts of more deep seclusion; and connect
The landscape with the quiet of the sky.
The day is come when I again repose
Here, under this dark sycamore, and view
These plots of cottage-ground, these orchard-tufts,
Which at this season, with their unripe fruits,
Are clad in one green hue, and lose themselves
Mid groves and copses. Once again I see
These hedge-rows, hardly hedge-rows, little lines
Of sportive wood run wild; these pastoral farms,
Green to the very door; and wreaths of smoke
Sent up in silence, from among the trees!
With some uncertain notice, as might seem,
Of vagrant dwellers in the houseless woods,
Or of some Hermit's cave, where by his fire
The Hermit sits alone.
These beauteous forms,
Through a long absence, have not been to me
As is a landscape to a blind man's eye:

But oft, in lonely rooms, and mid the din
Of towns and cities, I have owed to them,
In hours of weariness, sensations sweet,
Felt in the blood, and felt along the heart;
And passing even into my purer mind,
With tranquil restoration:—feelings, too,
Of unremembered pleasure: such, perhaps,
As have no slight or trivial influence
On that best portion of a good man's life,
His little, nameless, unremembered acts
Of kindness and of love. Nor less, I trust,
To them I may have owed another gift,
Of aspect more sublime; that blessed mood,
In which the burthen of the mystery,
In which the heavy and the weary weight
Of all this unintelligible world,
Is lightened:—that serene and blessed mood,
In which the affections gently lead us on,—
Until, the breath of this corporeal frame
And even the motion of our human blood
Almost suspended, we are laid asleep
In body, and become a living soul:
While with an eye made quiet by the power
Of harmony, and the deep power of joy,
We see into the life of things.
If this
Be but a vain belief, yet, oh! how oft—
In darkness, and amid the many shapes
Of joyless daylight; when the fretful stir
Unprofitable, and the fever of the world
Have hung upon the beatings of my heart,
How oft, in spirit, have I turned to thee,
O sylvan Wye! thou wanderer thro' the woods,
How often has my spirit turned to thee!

And now, with gleams of half-extinguished thought,
With many recognitions dim and faint,
And somewhat of a sad perplexity,
The picture of the mind revives again:
While here I stand, not only with the sense
Of present pleasure, but with pleasing thoughts
That in this moment there is life and food
For future years. And so I dare to hope,
Though changed, no doubt, from what I was when first
I came among these hills; when like a roe
I bounded o'er the mountains, by the sides
Of the deep rivers, and the lonely streams,
Wherever nature led: more like a man
Flying from something that he dreads, than one
Who sought the thing he loved. For nature then
(The coarser pleasures of my boyish days,
And their glad animal movements all gone by)
To me was all in all.—I cannot paint
What then I was. The sounding cataract
Haunted me like a passion: the tall rock,
The mountain, and the deep and gloomy wood,
Their colours and their forms, were then to me
An appetite; a feeling and a love,
That had no need of a remoter charm,
By thought supplied, nor any interest
Unborrowed from the eye.—That time is past,
And all its aching joys are now no more,
And all its dizzy raptures. Not for this
Faint I, nor mourn nor murmur; other gifts
Have followed, for such loss, I would believe,
Abundant recompense. For I have learned
To look on nature, not as in the hour
Of thoughtless youth; but hearing oftentimes
The still, sad music of humanity,

Nor harsh nor grating, though of ample power
To chasten and subdue. And I have felt
A presence that disturbs me with the joy
Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime
Of something far more deeply interfused,
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
And the round ocean, and the living air,
And the blue sky, and in the mind of man:
A motion and a spirit, that impels
All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
And rolls through all things. Therefore am I still
A lover of the meadows and the woods,
And mountains; and of all that we behold
From this green earth; of all the mighty world
Of eye and ear, both what they half create,
And what perceive; well pleased to recognise
In nature and the language of the sense,
The anchor of my purest thoughts, the nurse,
The guide, the guardian of my heart, and soul
Of all my moral being.

Nor perchance,
If I were not thus taught, should I the more
Suffer my genial spirits to decay:
For thou art with me, here upon the banks
Of this fair river; thou, my dearest Friend,
My dear, dear Friend, and in thy voice I catch
The language of my former heart, and read
My former pleasures in the shooting lights
Of thy wild eyes. Oh! yet a little while
May I behold in thee what I was once,
My dear, dear Sister! and this prayer I make,
Knowing that Nature never did betray
The heart that loved her; 'tis her privilege,
Through all the years of this our life, to lead

From joy to joy: for she can so inform
The mind that is within us, so impress
With quietness and beauty, and so feed
With lofty thoughts, that neither evil tongues,
Rash judgments, nor the sneers of selfish men,
Nor greetings where no kindness is, nor all
The dreary intercourse of daily life,
Shall e'er prevail against us, or disturb
Our cheerful faith, that all which we behold
Is full of blessings. Therefore let the moon
Shine on thee in thy solitary walk;
And let the misty mountain-winds be free
To blow against thee: and, in after years,
When these wild ecstasies shall be matured
Into a sober pleasure, when thy mind
Shall be a mansion for all lovely forms,
Thy memory be as a dwelling place
For all sweet sounds and harmonies; oh! then,
If solitude, or fear, or pain, or grief,
Should be thy portion, with what healing thoughts
Of tender joy wilt thou remember me,
And these my exhortations! Nor, perchance—
If I should be where I no more can hear
Thy voice, nor catch from thy wild eyes these gleams
Of past existence,—wilt thou then forget
That on the banks of this delightful stream
We stood together; and that I, so long
A worshipper of Nature, hither came,
Unwearied in that service; rather say
With warmer love—oh! with far deeper zeal
Of holier love. Nor wilt thou then forget,
That after many wanderings, many years
Of absence, these steep woods and lofty cliffs,
And this green pastoral landscape, were to me
More dear, both for themselves and for thy sake.

THE OLD CUMBERLAND BEGGAR.

1798.

I SAW an aged Beggar in my walk;
And he was seated, by the highway side,
On a low structure of rude masonry
Built at the foot of a huge hill, that they
Who lead their horses down the steep rough road
May thence remount at ease. The aged Man
Had placed his staff across the broad smooth stone
That overlays the pile; and, from a bag
All white with flour, the dole of village dames,
He drew his scraps and fragments, one by one;
And scanned them with a fixed and serious look
Of idle computation. In the sun,
Upon the second step of that small pile,
Surrounded by those wild unpeopled hills,
He sat, and ate his food in solitude:
And ever, scattered from his palsied hand,
That, still attempting to prevent the waste,
Was baffled still, the crumbs in little showers
Fell on the ground; and the small mountain birds,
Not venturing yet to peck their destined meal,
Approached within the length of half his staff.

Him from my childhood have I known; and then
He was so old, he seems not older now;
He travels on, a solitary Man,
So helpless in appearance, that for him
The sauntering Horseman throws not with a slack
And careless hand his alms upon the ground,
But stops,—that he may safely lodge the coin
Within the old Man's hat; nor quits him so,
But still, when he has given his horse the rein,

Watches the aged Beggar with a look
Sidelong, and half-reverted. She who tends
The toll-gate, when in summer at her door
She turns her wheel, if on the road she sees
The aged Beggar coming, quits her work,
And lifts the latch for him that he may pass.
The post-boy, when his rattling wheels o'ertake
The aged Beggar in the woody lane,
Shouts to him from behind; and, if thus warned
The old Man does not change his course, the boy
Turns with less noisy wheels to the road-side,
And passes gently by, without a curse
Upon his lips, or anger at his heart.

He travels on, a solitary Man;
His age has no companion. On the ground
His eyes are turned, and, as he moves along,
They move along the ground; and, evermore,
Instead of common and habitual sight
Of fields with rural works, of hill and dale,
And the blue sky, one little span of earth
Is all his prospect. Thus, from day to day,
Bow-bent, his eyes for ever on the ground,
He plies his weary journey; seeing still,
And seldom knowing that he sees, some straw,
Some scattered leaf, or marks which, in one track,
The nails of cart or chariot-wheel have left
Impressed on the white road,—in the same line,
At distance still the same. Poor Traveller!
His staff trails with him; scarcely do his feet
Disturb the summer dust; he is so still
In look and motion, that the cottage curs,
Ere he has passed the door, will turn away,
Weary of barking at him. Boys and girls,
The vacant and the busy, maids and youths,

And urchins newly breeched—all pass him by:
Him even the slow-paced waggon leaves behind.

But deem not this Man useless.—Statesmen! ye
Who are so restless in your wisdom, ye
Who have a broom still ready in your hands
To rid the world of nuisances; ye proud,
Heart-swoln, while in your pride ye contemplate
Your talents, power, or wisdom, deem him not
A burthen of the earth! 'Tis Nature's law
That none, the meanest of created things,
Of forms created the most vile and brute,
The dullest or most noxious, should exist
Divorced from good—a spirit and pulse of good,
A life and soul, to every mode of being
Inseparably linked. *While thus he creeps*
From door to door,[35] the Villagers in him
Behold a record which together binds
Past deeds and offices of charity,
Else unremembered, and so keeps alive
The kindly mood in hearts which lapse of years,
And that half-wisdom half-experience gives,
Make slow to feel, and by sure steps resign
To selfishness and cold oblivious cares.
Among the farms and solitary huts,
Hamlets and thinly-scattered villages,
Where'er the aged Beggar takes his rounds,
The mild necessity of use compels
To acts of love; and habit does the work
Of reason; yet prepares that after-joy
Which reason cherishes. And thus the soul,
By that sweet taste of pleasure unpursued,
Doth find herself insensibly disposed
To virtue and true goodness.

Some there are,
By their good works exalted, lofty minds
And meditative, authors of delight
And happiness, which to the end of time
Will live, and spread, and kindle: even such minds
In childhood, from this solitary Being,
Or from like wanderer, haply have received
(A thing more precious far than all that books
Or the solicitudes of love can do!)
That first mild touch of sympathy and thought,
In which they found their kindred with a world
Where want and sorrow were. The easy man
Who sits at his own door,—and, like the pear
That overhangs his head from the green wall,
Feeds in the sunshine; the robust and young,
The prosperous and unthinking, they who live
Sheltered, and flourish in a little grove
Of their own kindred;—all behold in him
A silent monitor, which on their minds
Must needs impress a transitory thought
Of self-congratulation, to the heart
Of each recalling his peculiar boons,
His charters and exemptions; and, perchance,
Though he to no one give the fortitude
And circumspection needful to preserve
His present blessings, and to husband up
The respite of the season, he, at least,
And 'tis no vulgar service, makes them felt.

Yet further.—Many, I believe, there are
Who live a life of virtuous decency,
Men who can hear the Decalogue and feel
No self-reproach; who of the moral law
Established in the land where they abide

Are strict observers; and not negligent
In acts of love to those with whom they dwell,
Their kindred, and the children of their blood.
Praise be to such, and to their slumbers peace!
—But of the poor man ask, the abject poor;
Go, and demand of him, if there be here
In this cold abstinence from evil deeds,
And these inevitable charities,
Wherewith to satisfy the human soul?
No—man is dear to man; the poorest poor
Long for some moments in a weary life
When they can know and feel that they have been,
Themselves, the fathers and the dealers out
Of some small blessings; have been kind to such
As needed kindness; for this single cause,
That we have all of us one human heart.
—Such pleasure is to one kind Being known,
My neighbour, when with punctual care, each week,
Duly as Friday comes, though pressed herself
By her own wants, she from her store of meal
Takes one unsparing handful for the scrip
Of this old Mendicant, and, from her door
Returning with exhilarated heart,
Sits by her fire, and builds her hope in heaven.

Then let him pass, a blessing on his head!
And while in that vast solitude to which
The tide of things has borne him, he appears
To breathe and live but for himself alone,
Unblamed, uninjured, let him bear about
The good which the benignant law of Heaven
Has hung around him: and, while life is his,
Still let him prompt the unlettered villagers
To tender offices and pensive thoughts.

—Then let him pass, a blessing on his head!
And, long as he can wander, let him breathe
The freshness of the valleys; let his blood
Struggle with frosty air and winter snows;
And let the chartered wind that sweeps the heath
Beat his grey locks against his withered face.
Reverence the hope whose vital anxiousness
Gives the last human interest to his heart.
May never HOUSE, misnamed of INDUSTRY,
Make him a captive!—for that pent-up din,
Those life-consuming sounds that clog the air
Be his the natural silence of old age!
Let him be free of mountain solitudes;
And have around him, whether heard or not,
The pleasant melody of woodland birds.
Few are his pleasures: if his eyes have now
Been doomed so long to settle upon earth
That not without some effort they behold
The countenance of the horizontal sun,
Rising or setting, let the light at least
Find a free entrance to their languid orbs.
And let him, *where* and *when* he will, sit down
Beneath the trees, or on a grassy bank
Of highway side, and with the little birds
Share his chance-gathered meal; and, finally
As in the eye of Nature he has lived,
So in the eye of Nature let him die!

EVENING VOLUNTARIES.

(No. IX.)

(COMPOSED UPON AN EVENING OF EXTRAORDINARY SPLENDOUR AND BEAUTY.)

1818.

I.

HAD this effulgence disappeared
With flying haste, I might have sent,
Among the speechless clouds, a look
Of blank astonishment;
But 'tis endued with power to stay,
And sanctify one closing day,
That frail Mortality may see—
What is?—ah no, but what *can* be!
Time was when field and watery cove
With modulated echoes rang,
While choirs of fervent Angels sang
Their vespers in the grove;
Or, crowning star-like, each some sovereign height,
Warbled, for heaven above and earth below,
Strains suitable to both.—Such holy rite,
Methinks, if audibly repeated now
From hill or valley, could not move
Sublimer transport, purer love,
Than doth this silent spectacle—the gleam—
The shadow—and the peace supreme!

II.

No sound is uttered,—but a deep
And solemn harmony pervades

The hollow vale from steep to steep,
And penetrates the glades.
Far-distant images draw nigh,
Called forth by wondrous potency
Of beamy radiance, that imbues
Whate'er it strikes with gem-like hues!
In vision exquisitely clear,
Herds range along the mountain side;
And glistening antlers are descried;
And gilded flocks appear.
Thine is the tranquil hour, purpureal Eve!
But long as god-like wish, or hope divine,
Informs my spirit, ne'er can I believe
That this magnificence is wholly thine!
—From worlds not quickened by the sun
A portion of the gift is won;
An intermingling of Heaven's pomp is spread
On ground which British shepherds tread!

III.

And, if there be whom broken ties
Afflict, or injuries assail,
Yon hazy ridges to their eyes
Present a glorious scale,
Climbing suffused with sunny air,
To stop—no record hath told where!
And tempting Fancy to ascend,
And with immortal Spirits blend!
—Wings at my shoulders seem to play;
But, rooted here, I stand and gaze
On those bright steps that heaven-ward raise
Their practicable way.
Come forth, ye drooping old men, look abroad,
And see to what fair countries ye are bound!

And if some traveller, weary of his road,
Hath slept since noon-tide on the grassy ground,
Ye Genii! to his covert speed;
And wake him with such gentle heed
As may attune his soul to meet the dower
Bestowed on this transcendent hour!

IV.

Such hues from their celestial Urn
Were wont to stream before mine eye,
Where'er it wandered in the morn
Of blissful infancy.
This glimpse of glory, why renewed?
Nay, rather speak with gratitude;
For, if a vestige of those gleams
Survived, 'twas only in my dreams.
Dread Power! whom peace and calmness serve
No less than Nature's threatening voice,
If ought unworthy be my choice,
From THEE if I would swerve;
Oh, let Thy grace remind me of the light
Full early lost, and fruitlessly deplored;
Which, at this moment, on my waking sight
Appears to shine by miracle restored;
My soul, though yet confined to earth,
Rejoices in a second birth.
—'Tis past, the visionary splendour fades;
And night approaches with her shades.

THE PRELUDE.

1799—1805.

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

I.

THE INFLUENCE OF NATURAL OBJECTS,

IN CALLING FORTH AND STRENGTHENING THE IMAGINATION IN BOYHOOD AND EARLY YOUTH.

1799.

(FROM BOOK I.)

WISDOM and Spirit of the universe!
Thou Soul that art the eternity of thought,
And givest to forms and images a breath
And everlasting motion, not in vain,
By day or star-light, thus from my first dawn
Of childhood didst thou intertwine for me
The passions that build up our human soul;
Not with the mean and vulgar works of man,
But with high objects, with enduring things—
With life and nature—purifying thus
The elements of feeling and of thought,
And sanctifying, by such discipline,
Both pain and fear, until we recognise
A grandeur in the beatings of the heart.
Nor was this fellowship vouchsafed to me
With stinted kindness. In November days,
When vapours rolling down the valley made
A lonely scene more lonesome, among woods,
At noon, and 'mid the calm of summer nights,
When, by the margin of the trembling lake,
Beneath the gloomy hills *I homeward*[36] went

In solitude, such intercourse was mine:
Mine was it in the fields both day and night,
And by the waters, all the summer long.

And in the frosty season, when the sun
Was set, and visible for many a mile
The cottage windows blazed through twilight gloom,
I heeded not their summons: happy time
It was indeed for all of us—for me
It was a time of rapture! Clear and loud
The village clock tolled six,—I wheeled about,
Proud and exulting like an untired horse
That cares not for his home. All shod with steel,
We hissed along the polished ice in games
Confederate, imitative of the chase
And woodland pleasures,—the resounding horn,
The pack loud chiming, and the hunted hare.
So through the darkness and the cold we flew,
And not a voice was idle; with the din
Smitten, the precipices rang aloud;
The leafless trees and every icy crag
Tinkled like iron; while far distant hills
Into the tumult sent an alien sound
Of melancholy not unnoticed, while the stars
Eastward were sparkling clear, and in the west
The orange sky of evening died away.
Not seldom from the uproar I retired
Into a silent bay, or sportively
Glanced sideway, leaving the tumultuous throng,
To cut across the reflex of a star
That fled, and, flying still before me, gleamed
Upon the glassy plain: and oftentimes,
When we had given our bodies to the wind,
And all the shadowy banks on either side

Came sweeping through the darkness, spinning still
The rapid line of motion, then at once
Have I, reclining back upon my heels,
Stopped short; yet still the solitary cliffs
Wheeled by me—even as if the earth had rolled
With visible motion her diurnal round!
Behind me did they stretch in solemn train,
Feebler and feebler, and I stood and watched
Till all was tranquil as a dreamless sleep.

II.

THERE WAS A BOY.

1799.

(FROM BOOK V.)

THERE was a Boy: ye knew him well, ye cliffs
And islands of Winander!—many a time
At evening, when the earliest stars began
To move along the edges of the hills,
Rising or setting, would he stand alone,
Beneath the trees, or by the glimmering lake,
And there, with fingers interwoven, both hands
Pressed closely palm to palm, and to his mouth
Uplifted, he, as through an instrument,
Blew mimic hootings to the silent owls,
That they might answer him; and they would shout
Across the watery vale, and shout again,
Responsive to his call, with quivering peals,
And long halloos and screams, and echoes loud,
Redoubled and redoubled, concourse wild
Of jocund din! *And when it chanced*
That pauses of deep silence mocked his skill,[37]
Then sometimes, in that silence while he hung

Listening, a gentle shock of mild surprise
Has carried far into his heart the voice
Of mountain torrents; or the visible scene
Would enter unawares into his mind,
With all its solemn imagery, its rocks,
Its woods, and that uncertain heaven, received
Into the bosom of the steady lake.

This Boy was taken from his mates, and died
In childhood, ere he was full twelve years old.
Fair is the spot, most beautiful the vale
Where he was born; the grassy churchyard hangs
Upon a slope above the village school,
And through that churchyard when my way has led
On summer evenings, I believe that there
A long half-hour together I have stood
Mute, looking at the grave in which he lies!

III.

THE ASCENT OF SNOWDON.

(FROM BOOK XIV.)

It was a close, warm, breezeless summer night,
Wan, dull, and glaring, with a dripping fog
Low-hung and thick that covered all the sky;
But, undiscouraged, we began to climb
The mountain-side.
The mist soon girt us round,
And, after ordinary travellers' talk
With our conductor, pensively we sank
Each into commerce with his private thoughts:
Thus did we breast the ascent, and by myself
Was nothing either seen or heard that checked

Those musings or diverted, save that once
The shepherd's lurcher, who among the crags,
Had to his joy unearthed a hedgehog, teased
His coiled-up prey with barkings turbulent.
This small adventure, for even such it seemed
In that wild place and at the dead of night,
Being over and forgotten, on we wound
In silence as before.
With forehead bent
Earthward, as if in opposition set
Against an enemy, I panted up
With eager pace, and no less eager thoughts.
Thus might we wear a midnight hour away,
Ascending at loose distance each from each,
And I, as chanced, the foremost of the band;
When at my feet the ground appeared to brighten,
And with a step or two seemed brighter still;
Nor was time given to ask or learn the cause,
For instantly a light upon the turf
Fell like a flash, and lo! as I looked up,
The Moon hung naked in a firmament
Of azure without cloud, and at my feet
Rested a silent sea of hoary mist.
A hundred hills their dusky backs upheaved
All over this still ocean; and beyond,
Far, far beyond, the solid vapours stretched,
In headlands, tongues, and promontory shapes,
Into the main Atlantic, that appeared
To dwindle, and give up his majesty,
Usurped upon far as the sight could reach.
Not so the ethereal vault; encroachment none
Was there, nor loss; only the inferior stars
Had disappeared, or shed a fainter light
In the clear presence of the full-orbed Moon,

Who, from her sovereign elevation, gazed
Upon the billowy ocean, as it lay
All meek and silent, save that through a rift—
Not distant from the shore whereon we stood,
A fixed, abysmal, gloomy, breathing-place—
Mounted the roar of waters, torrents, streams
Innumerable, roaring with one voice!
Heard over earth and sea, and, in that hour,
For so it seemed, felt by the starry heavens.

When into air had partially dissolved
That vision, given to spirits of the night
And three chance human wanderers, in calm thought
Reflected, it appeared to me the type
Of a majestic intellect, its acts
And its possessions, what it has and craves,
What in itself it is, and would become.
There I beheld the emblem of a mind
That feeds upon infinity, that broods
Over the dark abyss, intent to hear
Its voices issuing forth to silent light
In one continuous stream; a mind sustained
By recognitions of transcendent power,
In sense conducting to ideal form,
In soul of more than mortal privilege.
One function, above all, of such a mind
Had Nature shadowed there, by putting forth,
'Mid circumstances awful and sublime,
That mutual domination which she loves
To exert upon the face of outward things,
So moulded, joined, abstracted, so endowed
With interchangeable supremacy,
That men, least sensitive, see, hear, perceive,
And cannot choose but feel. The power, which all

Acknowledge when thus moved, which Nature thus
To bodily sense exhibits, is the express
Resemblance of that glorious faculty
That higher minds bear with them as their own.
This is the very spirit in which they deal
With the whole compass of the universe:
They from their native selves can send abroad
Kindred mutations; for themselves create
A like existence; and, whene'er it dawns
Created for them, catch it, or are caught
By its inevitable mastery,
Like angels stopped upon the wing by sound
Of harmony from Heaven's remotest spheres.
Them the enduring and the transient both
Serve to exalt; they build up greatest things
From least suggestions; ever on the watch,
Willing to work and to be wrought upon,
They need not extraordinary calls
To rouse them; in a world of life they live,
By sensible impressions not enthralled,
But by their quickening impulse made more prompt
To hold fit converse with the spiritual world,
And with the generations of mankind
Spread over time, past, present, and to come,
Age after age, till Time shall be no more.

ELEGIAC.

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

I.

AT THE GRAVE OF BURNS.

1803.

I SHIVER, Spirit fierce and bold,
At thought of what I now behold:
As vapours breathed from dungeons cold
Strike pleasure dead,
So sadness comes from out the mould
Where Burns is laid.

And have I then thy bones so near,
And thou forbidden to appear?
As if it were thyself that's here,
I shrink with pain;
And both my wishes and my fear
Alike are vain.

Off weight—nor press on weight!—away
Dark thoughts!—they come, but not to stay
With chastened feelings would I pay
The tribute due
To him, and aught that hides his clay
From mortal view.

Fresh as the flower whose modest worth
He sang, his genius "glinted" forth,
Rose like a star that touching earth,
For so it seems,
Doth glorify its humble birth
With matchless beams.

The piercing eye, the thoughtful brow,
The struggling heart, where be they now?—
Full soon the Aspirant of the plough,
The prompt, the brave,
Slept, with the obscurest, in the low
And silent grave.

I mourned with thousands, but as one
More deeply grieved, for He was gone
Whose light I hailed when first it shone,
And showed my youth
How Verse may build a princely throne
On humble truth.

Alas! where'er the current tends,
Regret pursues and with it blends,—
Huge Criffel's hoary top ascends
By Skiddaw seen,—
Neighbours we were, and loving friends
We might have been;

True friends though diversely inclined;
But heart with heart and mind with mind,
Where the main fibres are entwined,
Through Nature's skill,
May even by contraries be joined
More closely still.

A tear will start, and let it flow;
Thou "poor Inhabitant below,"
At this dread moment—even so—
Might we together
Have sate and talked where gowans blow,
Or on wild heather.

What treasures would have then been placed
Within my reach; of knowledge graced
By fancy what a rich repast?
But why go on!—
Oh! spare to sweep, thou mournful blast,
His grave grass-grown.

There, too, a Son, his joy and pride,
(Not three weeks past the Stripling died,)
Lies gathered to his Father's side,
Soul-moving sight!
Yet one to which is not denied
Some sad delight.

For *he* is safe, a quiet bed
Hath early found among the dead,
Harboured where none can be misled,
Wronged, or distrest;
And surely here it may be said
That such are blest.

And oh for Thee, by pitying grace
Checked oft-times in a devious race,
May He who halloweth the place
Where Man is laid
Receive thy Spirit in the embrace
For which it prayed!

Sighing I turned away; but ere
Night fell I heard, or seemed to hear,
Music that sorrow comes not near,
A ritual hymn,
Chaunted in love that casts out fear
By Seraphim.

II.

THOUGHTS.

SUGGESTED THE DAY FOLLOWING, ON THE BANKS OF NITH, NEAR THE POET'S RESIDENCE.

1803.

TOO frail to keep the lofty vow
That must have followed when his brow
Was wreathed—"The Vision" tells us how—
With holly spray,
He faltered, drifted to and fro,
And passed away.

Well might such thoughts, dear Sister, throng
Our minds when, lingering all too long,
Over the grave of Burns we hung
In social grief—
Indulged as if it were a wrong
To seek relief.

But, leaving each unquiet theme
Where gentlest judgments may misdeem,
And prompt to welcome every gleam
Of good and fair,
Let us beside this limpid stream
Breathe hopeful air.

Enough of sorrow, wreck, and blight;
Think rather of those moments bright
When to the consciousness of right
His course was true;
When Wisdom prospered in his sight
And Virtue grew.

Yes, freely let our hearts expand,
Freely as in youth's season bland,
When side by side, his Book in hand,
We wont to stray,
Our pleasure varying at command
Of each sweet Lay.

How oft inspired must he have trod
These pathways, yon far-stretching road!
There lurks his home; in that Abode,
With mirth elate,
Or in his nobly-pensive mood,
The Rustic sate.

Proud thoughts that Image overawes,
Before it humbly let us pause,
And ask of Nature, from what cause
And by what rules
She trained her Burns to win applause
That shames the Schools.

Through busiest street and loneliest glen
Are felt the flashes of his pen:
He rules 'mid winter snows, and when
Bees fill their hives;
Deep in the general heart of men
His power survives.

What need of fields in some far clime,
Where Heroes, Sages, Bards sublime,
And all that fetched the flowing rhyme
From genuine springs,
Shall dwell together till old Time
Folds up his wings?

Sweet Mercy! to the gates of Heaven
This Minstrel lead, his sins forgiven;
The rueful conflict, the heart riven
With vain endeavour,
And memory of Earth's bitter leaven
Effaced for ever.

But why to Him confine the prayer
When kindred thoughts and yearnings bear
On the frail heart the purest share
With all that live?—
The best of what we do and are,
Just God, forgive!

III.

ON THE DEATH OF JAMES HOGG.

1835.

WHEN first, descending from the moorlands,
I saw the Stream of Yarrow glide
Along a bare and open valley,
The Ettrick Shepherd was my guide.

When last along its banks I wandered,
Through groves that had begun to shed
Their golden leaves upon the pathways,
My steps the Border-minstrel led.

The mighty Minstrel breathes no longer,
'Mid mouldering ruins low he lies;
And death upon the braes of Yarrow,
Has closed the Shepherd-poet's eyes:

Nor has the rolling year twice measured,
From sign to sign, its stedfast course,
Since every mortal power of Coleridge
Was frozen at its marvellous source;

The rapt One, of the godlike forehead,
The heaven-eyed creature sleeps in earth:
And Lamb, the frolic and the gentle,
Has vanished from his lonely hearth.

Like clouds that rake the mountain-summits,
Or waves that own no curbing hand,
How fast has brother followed brother,
From sunshine to the sunless land!

Yet I, whose lids from infant slumber
Were earlier raised, remain to hear
A timid voice, that asks in whispers,
"Who next will drop and disappear?"

Our haughty life is crowned with darkness,
Like London with its own black wreath,
On which with thee, O Crabbe! forth-looking,
I gazed from Hampstead's breezy heath.

As if but yesterday departed,
Thou too art gone before; but why,
O'er ripe fruit, seasonably gathered,
Should frail survivors heave a sigh?

Mourn rather for that holy Spirit,
Sweet as the spring, as ocean deep;
For Her* who, ere her summer faded,
Has sunk into a breathless sleep.

No more of old romantic sorrows,
For slaughtered Youth or love-lorn Maid!
With sharper grief is Yarrow smitten,
And Ettrick mourns with her their Poet dead.

* Felicia Hemans.

SONNETS.

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

I.

NATIONAL INDEPENDENCE AND LIBERTY.

(I.)

I.—COMPOSED BY THE SEA-SIDE NEAR CALAIS, August 1802.

FAIR Star of Evening, Splendour of the West,
Star of my Country!—on the horizon's brink
Thou hangest, stooping, as might seem, to sink
On England's bosom; yet well pleased to rest,
Meanwhile, and be to her a glorious crest
Conspicuous to the Nations. Thou, I think,
Should'st be my Country's emblem; and should'st wink,
Bright Star! with laughter on her banners, drest
In thy fresh beauty. There! that dusky spot
Beneath thee, that is England; there she lies.
Blessings be on you both! one hope, one lot,
One life, one glory!—I, with many a fear
For my dear Country, many heartfelt sighs,
Among men who do not love her, linger here.

(II.)

II.—CALAIS, August 1802.

IS it a reed that's shaken by the wind,
Or what is it that ye go forth to see?
Lords, lawyers, statesmen, squires of low degree,
Men known, and men unknown, sick, lame, and blind,
Post forward all, like creatures of one kind,
With first-fruit offerings crowd to bend the knee
In France, before the new-born Majesty.
'Tis ever thus. Ye men of prostrate mind,
A seemly reverence may be paid to power;
But that's a loyal virtue, never sown
In haste, nor springing with a transient shower:
When truth, when sense, when liberty were flown,
What hardship had it been to wait an hour?
Shame on you, feeble Heads, to slavery prone!

(VI.)

III.—ON THE EXTINCTION OF THE VENETIAN REPUBLIC.

August 1802.

ONCE did She hold the gorgeous East in fee;
And was the safeguard of the West: the worth
Of Venice did not fall below her birth,
Venice, the eldest Child of Liberty.
She was a Maiden City, bright and free;
No guile seduced, no force could violate;
And, when She took unto herself a Mate,
She must espouse the everlasting Sea.
And what if She had seen those glories fade,
Those titles vanish, and that strength decay;
Yet shall some tribute of regret be paid
When her long life hath reached its final day:
Men are we, and must grieve when even the Shade
Of that which once was great, is passed away.

(VIII.)

IV.—TO TOUSSAINT L'OUVERTURE.

August 1802.

TOUSSAINT, the most unhappy man of men!
Whether the whistling Rustic tend his plough
Within thy hearing, or thy head be now
Pillowed in some deep dungeon's earless den;—
O miserable Chieftain! where and when
Wilt thou find patience? Yet die not; do thou
Wear rather in thy bonds a cheerful brow;
Though fallen Thyself, never to rise again,
Live, and take comfort. Thou hast left behind
Powers that will work for thee; air, earth, and skies;
There's not a breathing of the common wind
That will forget thee; thou hast great allies;
Thy friends are exultations, agonies,
And love, and Man's unconquerable mind.

(XI.)

V.—NEAR DOVER, September 1802.

INLAND, within a hollow vale, I stood;
And saw, while sea was calm and air was clear,
The coast of France—the coast of France how near!
Drawn almost into frightful neighbourhood.
I shrunk; for verily the barrier flood
Was like a lake, or river bright and fair,
A span of waters; yet what power is there!
What mightiness for evil and for good!
Even so doth God protect us if we be
Virtuous and wise. Winds blow, and waters roll,
Strength to the brave, and Power, and Deity;
Yet in themselves are nothing! One decree
Spake laws to *them*, and said that by the soul
Only, the Nations shall be great and free.

(XII.)

VI.—ON THE SUBJUGATION OF SWITZERLAND.

1807.

TWO Voices are there; one is of the Sea,
One of the Mountains; each a mighty Voice:
In both from age to age Thou didst rejoice,
They were thy chosen Music, Liberty!
There came a Tyrant, and with holy glee
Thou fought'st against him; but hast vainly striven:
Thou from thy Alpine holds at length art driven,
Where not a torrent murmurs heard by thee.
Of one deep bliss thine ear hath been bereft:
Then cleave, O cleave to that which still is left;
For, high-souled Maid, what sorrow would it be
That Mountain floods should thunder as before,
And Ocean bellow from his rocky shore,
And neither awful Voice be heard by thee!

(XIII.)

VII.—THE TIMES THAT ARE.

September 1802.

O FRIEND! I know not which way I must look
For comfort, being, as I am opprest,
To think that now our Life is only drest
For show; mean handy-work of craftsmen, cook,
Or groom!—We must run glittering like a Brook
In the open sunshine, or we are unblest:
The wealthiest man among us is the best:
No grandeur now in nature or in book
Delights us. Rapine, avarice, expense,
This is idolatry; and these we adore:
Plain living and high thinking are no more:
The homely beauty of the good old cause
Is gone: our peace, our fearful innocence,
And pure religion breathing household laws.

(XIV.)

VIII.—LONDON.

September 1802.

MILTON! thou should'st be living at this hour:
England hath need of thee: she is a fen
Of stagnant waters: altar, sword, and pen,
Fireside, the heroic wealth of hall and bower,
Have forfeited their ancient English dower
Of inward happiness. We are selfish men;
Oh! raise us up, return to us again;
And give us manners, virtue, freedom, power.
Thy soul was like a Star, and dwelt apart:
Thou hadst a voice whose sound was like the sea:
Pure as the naked heavens, majestic, free,
So didst thou travel on life's common way,
In cheerful godliness; and yet thy heart
The lowliest duties on herself did lay.

(XVI.)

IX.—"IT IS NOT TO BE THOUGHT OF."

September 1802.

IT is not to be thought of that the Flood
Of British freedom, which, to the open sea
Of the world's praise, from dark antiquity
Hath flowed, "with pomp of waters, unwithstood,"
Roused though it be full often to a mood
Which spurns the check of salutary bands,
That this most famous Stream in bogs and sands
Should perish; and to evil and to good
Be lost for ever. In our halls is hung
Armoury of the invincible Knights of old:
We must be free or die, who speak the tongue
That Shakspeare spake; the faith and morals hold
Which Milton held.—In every thing we are sprung
Of Earth's first blood, have titles manifold.

(XVII.)

X.—"WHEN I HAVE BORNE IN MEMORY."

September 1802.

WHEN I have borne in memory what has tamed
Great Nations, how ennobling thoughts depart
When men change swords for ledgers, and desert
The student's bower for gold, some fears unnamed
I had, my Country!—am I to be blamed?
Now, when I think of thee, and what thou art,
Verily, in the bottom of my heart,
Of those unfilial fears I am ashamed.
For dearly must we prize thee: we who find
In thee a bulwark for the cause of men;
And I by my affection was beguiled:
What wonder if a Poet now and then,
Among the many movements of his mind,
Felt for thee as a lover or a child!

(XX.)

XI.—"THESE TIMES STRIKE MONIED WORLDLINGS," *October* 1803.

THESE times strike monied worldlings with dismay:
Even rich men, brave by nature, taint the air
With words of apprehension and despair:
While tens of thousands, thinking on the affray,
Men unto whom sufficient for the day
And minds not stinted or untilled are given,
Sound, healthy, children of the God of heaven,
Are cheerful as the rising sun in May.
What do we gather hence but firmer faith
That every gift of noble origin
Is breathed upon by Hope's perpetual breath;
That virtue and the faculties within
Are vital,—and that riches are akin
To fear, to change, to cowardice, and death?

(XXI.)

XII.—"ENGLAND! THE TIME IS COME." 1803.

ENGLAND! the time is come when thou should'st wean
Thy heart from its emasculating food;
The truth should now be better understood;
Old things have been unsettled; we have seen
Fair seed-time, better harvest might have been
But for thy trespasses; and, at this day,
If for Greece, Egypt, India, Africa,
Aught good were destined, thou would'st step between.
England! all nations in this charge agree:
But worse, more ignorant in love and hate,
Far—far more abject, is thine Enemy:
Therefore the wise pray for thee, though the freight
Of thy offences be a heavy weight:
Oh grief that Earth's best hopes rest all with Thee!

(XXIII.)

XIII.—TO THE MEN OF KENT, October 1803.

VANGUARD of Liberty, ye men of Kent,
Ye children of a Soil that doth advance
Her haughty brow against the coast of France,
Now is the time to prove your hardiment!
To France be words of invitation sent!
They from their fields can see the countenance
Of your fierce war, may ken the glittering lance,
And hear you shouting forth your brave intent.
Left single, in bold parley, ye, of yore,
Did from the Norman win a gallant wreath;
Confirmed the charters that were yours before;—
No parleying now! In Britain is one breath;
We all are with you now from shore to shore:—
Ye men of Kent, 'tis victory or death!

XIV.—IN THE PASS OF KILLICRANKY.

(FROM MEMORIALS OF A TOUR IN SCOTLAND. XIV.)

An invasion being expected, October 1803.

SIX thousand veterans practised in war's game,
Tried men, at Killicranky were arrayed
Against an equal host that wore the plaid,
Shepherds and herdsmen.—Like a whirlwind came
The Highlanders, the slaughter spread like flame;
And Garry, thundering down his mountain-road,
Was stopped, and could not breathe beneath the load
Of the dead bodies.—'Twas a day of shame
For them whom precept and the pedantry
Of cold mechanic battle do enslave.
O for a single hour of that Dundee
Who on that day the word of onset gave!
Like conquest would the Men of England see;
And her Foes find a like inglorious grave.

(XXVII.)

XV.—ANOTHER YEAR! November 1806.

ANOTHER year!—another deadly blow!
Another mighty Empire overthrown!
And We are left, or shall be left, alone;
The last that dare to struggle with the Foe.
'Tis well! from this day forward we shall know
That in ourselves our safety must be sought;
That by our own right hands it must be wrought;
That we must stand unpropped, or be laid low.
O dastard whom such foretaste doth not cheer!
We shall exult, if they who rule the land
Be men who hold its many blessings dear,
Wise, upright, valiant; not a servile band,
Who are to judge of danger which they fear,
And honour which they do not understand.

(XXXIII.)

XVI.—"HERE PAUSE: THE POET CLAIMS." 1811.

HERE pause: the poet claims at least this praise,
That virtuous Liberty hath been the scope
Of his pure song, which did not shrink from hope
In the worst moment of these evil days;
From hope, the paramount *duty* that Heaven lays,
For its own honour, on man's suffering heart.
Never may from our souls one truth depart—
That an accursed thing it is to gaze
On prosperous tyrants with a dazzled eye;
Nor—touched with due abhorrence of *their* guilt
For whose dire ends tears flow, and blood is spilt,
And justice labours in extremity—
Forget thy weakness, upon which is built,
O wretched man, the throne of tyranny!

II.
MISCELLANEOUS.

(NO. I., PART I.)

XVII.—ON THE SONNET.

1806.

NUNS fret not at their convent's narrow room;
And hermits are contented with their cells;
And students with their pensive citadels;
Maids at the wheel, the weaver at his loom,
Sit blithe and happy; bees that soar for bloom,
High as the highest Peak of Furness-fells,
Will murmur by the hour in foxglove bells:
In truth the prison, unto which we doom
Ourselves, no prison is: and hence for me,
In sundry moods, 'twas pastime to be bound
Within the Sonnet's scanty plot of ground;
Pleased if some Souls (for such there needs must be)
Who have felt the weight of too much liberty,
Should find brief solace there, as I have found.

(NO. XIV., PART I.)

XVIII.—TO SLEEP.

1806.

A FLOCK of sheep that leisurely pass by,
One after one; the sound of rain, and bees
Murmuring; the fall of rivers, winds and seas,
Smooth fields, white sheets of water, and pure sky;
I have thought of all by turns, and yet do lie
Sleepless! and soon the small birds' melodies
Must hear, first uttered from my orchard trees;
And the first cuckoo's melancholy cry.
Even thus last night, and two nights more, I lay,
And could not win thee, Sleep! by any stealth:
So do not let me wear to-night away:
Without Thee what is all the morning's wealth?
Come, blessed barrier between day and day,
Dear mother of fresh thoughts and joyous health!

(NO. XXX., PART I.)

XIX.—ON THE SEA-SHORE NEAR CALAIS.

1802.

IT is a beauteous evening, calm and free,
The holy time is quiet as a Nun
Breathless with adoration; the broad sun
Is sinking down in its tranquillity;
The gentleness of heaven broods o'er the Sea:
Listen! the mighty Being is awake,
And doth with his eternal motion make
A sound like thunder—everlastingly.
Dear Child! dear Girl! that walkest with me here,
If thou appear untouched by solemn thought,
Thy nature is not therefore less divine:
Thou liest in Abraham's bosom all the year;
And worship'st at the Temple's inner shrine,
God being with thee when we know it not.

(NO. XXXI., PART I.)

XX.—"WHERE LIES THE LAND?"

1806.

WHERE lies the Land to which yon Ship must go?
Fresh as a lark mounting at break of day,
Festively she puts forth in trim array;
Is she for tropic suns, or polar snow?
What boots the inquiry?—Neither friend nor foe
She cares for; let her travel where she may
She finds familiar names, a beaten way
Ever before her, and a wind to blow.
Yet still I ask, what haven is her mark?
And, almost as it was when ships were rare,
(From time to time, like Pilgrims, here and there
Crossing the waters) doubt, and something dark,
Of the old Sea some reverential fear,
Is with me at thy farewell, joyous Bark!

(NO. XXXIII., PART I.)

XXI.—"THE WORLD IS TOO MUCH WITH US."

1806.

THE world is too much with us; late and soon,
Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers:
Little we see in Nature that is ours;
We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon!
The Sea that bares her bosom to the moon;
The winds that will be howling at all hours,
And are up-gathered now like sleeping flowers;
For this, for every thing, we are out of tune;
It moves us not.—Great God! I'd rather be
A Pagan suckled in a creed outworn;
So might I, standing on this pleasant lea,
Have glimpses that would make me less forlorn;
Have sight of Proteus rising from the sea;
Or hear old Triton blow his wreathèd horn.

(NO. I., PART II.)

XXII.—SCORN NOT THE SONNET.

1827.

SCORN not the Sonnet; Critic, you have frowned,
Mindless of its just honours; with this key
Shakespeare unlocked his heart; the melody
Of this small lute gave ease to Petrarch's wound;
A thousand times this pipe did Tasso sound;
With it Camöens soothed an exile's grief;
The Sonnet glittered a gay myrtle leaf
Amid the cypress with which Dante crowned
His visionary brow: a glow-worm lamp,
It cheered mild Spenser, called from Faery-land
To struggle through dark ways; and, when a damp
Fell round the path of Milton, in his hand
The Thing became a trumpet, whence he blew
Soul-animating strains—alas, too few!

(NO. XXXVI., PART II.)

XXIII. — COMPOSED UPON WESTMINSTER BRIDGE, September 1802.

EARTH has not any thing to show more fair:
Dull would he be of soul who could pass by
A sight so touching in its majesty:
This City now doth, like a garment, wear
The beauty of the morning; silent, bare,
Ships, towers, domes, theatres, and temples lie
Open unto the fields, and to the sky;
All bright and glittering in the smokeless air.
Never did sun more beautifully steep
In his first splendour, valley, rock, or hill;
Ne'er saw I, never felt, a calm so deep!
The river glideth at his own sweet will:
Dear God! the very houses seem asleep;
And all that mighty heart is lying still!

(NO. XXVII., PART III.)

XXIV.—THE POET.

1842.

A POET!—He hath put his heart to school,
Nor dares to move unpropped upon the staff
Which Art hath lodged within his hand—must laugh
By precept only, and shed tears by rule.
Thy Art be Nature; the live current quaff,
And let the groveller sip his stagnant pool,
In fear that else, when Critics grave and cool
Have killed him, Scorn should write his epitaph.
How does the Meadow-flower its bloom unfold?
Because the lovely little flower is free
Down to its root, and, in that freedom, bold;
And so the grandeur of the Forest-tree
Comes not by casting in a formal mould
But from its *own* divine vitality.

(FROM YARROW VISITED, ETC., NO. II.)

XXV.—THE DEPARTURE OF SIR WALTER SCOTT FROM ABBOTSFORD, FOR NAPLES.

1831.

A TROUBLE, not of clouds, or weeping rain,
Nor of the setting sun's pathetic light
Engendered, hangs o'er Eildon's triple height:
Spirits of Power, assembled there, complain
For kindred Power departing from their sight;
While Tweed, best pleased in chanting a blithe strain,
Saddens his voice again, and yet again.
Lift up your hearts, ye Mourners! for the might
Of the whole world's good wishes with him goes;
Blessings and prayers in nobler retinue
Than sceptred king or laurelled conqueror knows,
Follow this wondrous Potentate. Be true,
Ye winds of ocean, and the midland sea,
Wafting your Charge to soft Parthenope!

(FROM POEMS COMPOSED DURING A TOUR. NO. XXXVII.)

XXVI.—BURNS' DAISY.

1833.

"THERE!" said a Stripling, pointing with meet pride
Towards a low roof with green trees half concealed,
"Is Mosgiel Farm; and that's the very field
Where Burns ploughed up the Daisy." Far and wide
A plain below stretched seaward, while, descried
Above sea-clouds, the Peaks of Arran rose;
And, by that simple notice, the repose
Of earth, sky, sea, and air, was vivified.
Beneath "the random *bield* of clod or stone"
Myriads of daisies have shone forth in flower
Near the lark's nest, and in their natural hour
Have passed away; less happy than the One
That, by the unwilling ploughshare, died to prove
The tender charm of poetry and love.

III.
TO THE RIVER DUDDON.

1820.

(v.)

XXVII.—SOLE LISTENER, DUDDON!

SOLE listener, Duddon! to the breeze that played
With thy clear voice, I caught the fitful sound
Wafted o'er sullen moss and craggy mound—
Unfruitful solitudes, that seemed to upbraid
The sun in heaven!—but now, to form a shade
For Thee, green alders have together wound
Their foliage; ashes flung their arms around;
And birch-trees risen in silver colonnade.
And thou hast also tempted here to rise,
'Mid sheltering pines, this Cottage rude and grey;
Whose ruddy children, by the mother's eyes
Carelessly watched, sport through the summer day,
Thy pleased associates:—light as endless May
On infant bosoms lonely Nature lies.

(xxvi.)

XXVIII.—"RETURN, CONTENT."

RETURN, Content! for fondly I pursued,
Even when a child, the Streams—unheard, unseen;
Through tangled woods, impending rocks between;
Or, free as air, with flying inquest viewed
The sullen reservoirs whence their bold brood—
Pure as the morning, fretful, boisterous, keen,
Green as the salt-sea billows, white and green—
Poured down the hills, a choral multitude!
Nor have I tracked their course for scanty gains;
They taught me random cares and truant joys,
That shield from mischief and preserve from stains
Vague minds, while men are growing out of boys;
Maturer Fancy owes to their rough noise
Impetuous thoughts that brook not servile reins.

(XXXIV.)

XXIX.—AFTER-THOUGHT.

I THOUGHT of Thee, my partner and my guide,
As being past away.—Vain sympathies!
For, backward, Duddon, as I cast my eyes,
I see what was, and is, and will abide;
Still glides the Stream, and shall for ever glide;
The Form remains, the Function never dies;
While we, the brave, the mighty, and the wise,
We Men, who in our morn of youth defied
The elements, must vanish;—be it so!
Enough, if something from our hands have power
To live, and act, and serve the future hour;
And if, as toward the silent tomb we go,
Through love, through hope, and faith's transcendent dower,
We feel that we are greater than we know.

IV.
ECCLESIASTICAL SONNETS.

1821-2.

(NO. XXXIV., PART III.)

XXX.—MUTABILITY.

FROM low to high doth dissolution climb,
And sink from high to low, along a scale
Of awful notes, whose concord shall not fail;
A musical but melancholy chime,
Which they can hear who meddle not with crime,
Nor avarice, nor over-anxious care.
Truth fails not; but her outward forms that bear
The longest date do melt like frosty rime,
That in the morning whitened hill and plain
And is no more; drop like the tower sublime
Of yesterday, which royally did wear
His crown of weeds, but could not even sustain
Some casual shout that broke the silent air,
Or the unimaginable touch of Time.

(NO. XLIII., PART III.)

XXXI.—INSIDE OF KING'S COLLEGE CHAPEL, CAMBRIDGE.

TAX not the royal Saint with vain expense,
With ill-matched aims the Architect who planned,
Albeit labouring for a scanty band
Of white-robed Scholars only—this immense
And glorious work of fine intelligence!
Give all thou canst; high Heaven rejects the lore
Of nicely-calculated less or more;
So deemed the Man who fashioned for the sense
These lofty pillars, spread that branching roof
Self-poised, and scooped into ten thousand cells,
Where light and shade repose, where music dwells
Lingering—and wandering on as loth to die;
Like thoughts whose very sweetness yieldeth proof
That they were born for immortality.

(NO. XLV., PART III.)

XXXII.—THE SAME.

THEY dreamt not of a perishable home
Who thus could build. Be mine, in hours of fear
Or grovelling thought, to seek a refuge here;
Or through the aisles of Westminster to roam;
Where bubbles burst, and folly's dancing foam
Melts, if it cross the threshold; where the wreath
Of awe-struck wisdom droops:—or let my path
Lead to that younger Pile, whose sky-like dome
Hath typified by reach of daring art
Infinity's embrace; whose guardian crest,
The silent Cross, among the stars shall spread
As now, when She hath also seen her breast
Filled with mementoes, satiate with its part
Of grateful England's overflowing Dead.

NOTES

TO POEMS BY WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

The words in italics in the preceding illustrations are the readings of earlier versions; the following are the alternative renderings of the poet's final edition. The numbers given in brackets, thus (1.), refer to the positions occupied by the poems so numbered in Wordsworth's own classification.

1. Through primrose tufts, in that green bower,
2. But the least motion which they made
3. No check, no stay, this Streamlet fears;
4. The blackbird amid leafy trees,
5. The lark above the hill,
6. When she I loved looked every day
7. Fresh as a rose in June,
8. Beneath an evening-moon.
9. With quickening pace my horse drew nigh
10. The sinking moon to Lucy's cot
    Came near, and nearer still.
11. But O, fair Creature! in the light
    Of common day, so heavenly bright,
    I bless Thee, Vision as thou art,
12. More welcome notes to weary bands,
13. With something of angelic light.
14. Such rebounds our inward ear
    Catches sometimes from afar—
15. This stanza was subsequently incorporated in another poem, and is omitted in final edition of this one.
16. And sing a song to them
17. The first that died was sister Jane;
18. And to that simple object appertains
    A story—unenriched with strange events,
    Yet not unfit, I deem for the fireside,
19. The common air; hills, which with vigorous step,
    He had so often climbed;

20. With huge and black projection overbrowed
21. Fond spirit that blindly works in the blood of all—
22. His cradle, as with a woman's gentle hand.
23. As soon as he had armed himself with strength
To look his trouble in the face, it seemed
The Shepherd's sole resource to sell at once
24. He may return to us.
25. When thou art from me, even if I should touch
On things thou canst not know of.
26. Himself he propped, limbs, body, and pale face
27. Ere he replied, a flash of mild surprise
28. Oh! if through confidence misplaced
They fail, thy saving arms, dread Power! around
them cast.
29. Or he must fall, to sleep without his fame,
30. That every Man in arms should wish to be.
31. Vows have I made by fruitless hope inspired;
And from the infernal Gods, 'mid shades forlorn
Of night, my slaughtered Lord have I required:
32. Thou should'st elude the malice of the grave;
33. Nor should the change be mourned, even
34. Thus, all in vain exhorted and reproved,
She perished; and, as for a wilful crime
By the just Gods whom no weak pity moved,
Was doomed to wear out her appointed time,
Apart from happy Ghosts, that gather flowers
Of blissful quiet 'mid unfading bowers.
35. Then be assured
That least of all can aught—that ever owned
The heaven-regarding eye and front sublime
Which man is born to—sink, howe'er depressed,
So low as to be scorned without a sin;
Without offence to God cast out of view;
Like the dry remnant of a garden-flower
Whose seeds are shed, or as an implement
Worn out and worthless. While from door to door
This old Man creeps.
36. Beneath the gloomy hills, homeward I went
37. Of jocund din, and, when a lengthened pause
Of silence came and baffled his best skill,

Walter Scott.

1771—1832.

Walter Scott, antiquarian, poet, and novelist, whose prodigious achievements in literature and command of the magic of romanticism, gained for him the title, "the Wizard of the North," the most brilliant and successful man of letters of his time, was born in Edinburgh, on August 15th, 1771. His father, through whom he was descended from the house of Buccleuch, was a writer to the Signet, and his mother, whose maiden name was Anne Rutherford, was the daughter of an Edinburgh physician.

Walter was the ninth born of a family of twelve, the first six of whom died in early childhood. Delicate from birth, he suffered from a teething fever in his second year, a fever which left him, like his great successor Byron, permanently lame. The first seven years of his life were spent at the house of his grandfather, who occupied a farm at Sandy Knowe, near Smallholm Tower, the scene of his famous ballad, the "Eve of St. John." While here he became familiar with many a legend that invested the place, and learned to recite the ballads of the peasantry. He has given some account of his recollections of this time in the introduction to the third canto of

"Marmion." He was a sweet-tempered child, loving and beloved by all the household. In 1779 he returned to Edinburgh, and attended the High School for some five years. His school career was more brilliant than sound, and his reputation was higher in the playground than in the classroom. Like Macaulay, who resembled him in many ways, he was gifted with a fine memory, which, with his capacity for telling tales of the borders, earned for him the title of "Historian." Full of animal spirits, he was a frequent leader in youthful escapades, and often principal in a school-fight, his opponent being in some way fastened to a plank in complementary compensation for his lameness. From the High School at Edinburgh, he went for a time to a school at Kelso, and while there came across a copy of Percy's *Reliques of Ancient Poetry*, in which he found food congenial to his mind. Entering Edinburgh University the same year (1783), he attended the Greek, Latin, and logic classes, though he had a great aversion to Greek, and had previously refused to learn it. Latin he made some progress in, also acquiring a knowledge of French, Italian, and Spanish, and later of German. At fifteen years of age Scott was articled to his father and began the drudgery of the law, solacing his leisure by incorporating the vast stores of historical and romantic lore which became so useful to him afterwards. In 1792 he was called to the bar, and for fourteen years he continued nominally to practise, though it is said that his income from this source never exceeded £230 per annum. In 1796 he suffered a disappointment in love at the hands of Margaret Stuart, the daughter of Sir John Belches, of Invernay. For some six years he had

cherished the hope of marrying this lady, but in 1796 she was married to William, afterwards Sir William Forbes, of Pitsligo, who became a generous friend to Scott in after years. This disappointment drew from Scott's pen one of the most delicate productions of his muse "The Violet":

"The Violet in her greenwood bower,
Where birchen boughs with hazels mingle,
May boast itself the fairest flower
In glen, or copse, or forest dingle.

Though fair her gems of azure hue
Beneath the dewdrop's weight reclining,
I've seen an eye of lovelier blue,
More sweet, through watery lustre shining.

The summer sun that dew shall dry,
Ere yet the day be past its morrow;
Nor longer in my false love's eye,
Remain'd the tear of parting sorrow."

Stung probably in the pride which was so strongly marked a characteristic of his nature, Scott married in the following year Mademoiselle Charpentier, the daughter of a French royalist of Lyons, an amiable lady, who possessed many personal attractions.

Scott's first publication was a translation from the German of Bürger's ballads "Leonore" (William and Helen) and "The Wild Huntsman," which appeared in 1796, followed by a translation of Goethe's "Goetz von Berlichingen," in 1798, and "Glenfinlas," "The Eve of St. John," and "The Grey Brother," in 1799. In 1799 he was appointed Deputy-Sheriff of Selkirkshire, an office which brought him £300 a year; and in 1806 he undertook the duties of a Clerk of Session, discharging the same for five years without salary, in order to

secure for himself the reversion of the appointment. "The Border Minstrelry" next occupied his attention, and was published in 1803, eliciting the remark from a contemporary critic, that it contained "the elements of a hundred historical romances," the truth of which observation Scott so abundantly proved in after times. The year 1805 was an important one with him. In it he published "The Lay of the Last Minstrel." It was the year, too, in which he first conceived the idea of writing the "Waverley Novels," in which he was to triumph so unmistakably, and also the year of his secret and disastrous partnership with the Ballantynes, which laid the foundation of his subsequent ruin. In this year, also, he commenced his edition of the works of Dryden, with a life, which was published in 1808.

With the production of "The Lay of the Last Minstrel" in 1805 commenced that rapid and brilliant career of prosperity which was so phenomenal. History records no parallel to the success of the young poet. It was as though in searching for the Border Minstrelsy he had found the seven-league boots, and with them was distancing all comers upon the hill of fortune and of fame. His style was strikingly original. No poet before him had adopted the spirited measure in which he clothed his story, and which in this and subsequent poems he made so peculiarly his own. Added to the advantage of a new and vigorous style, Scott brought to bear upon his work a nature full of imagination and romance, and a mind stored with immense resources of historic and traditionary lore, and these he employed with an industry which was not the least remarkable of his extraordinary powers. The

magic of the opening lines was irresistible, and the old harper had fascinated the expectation of countless eyes and ears long before his feeble hand had tuned his rebel instrument. The story is full of vigorous passages and fine descriptions, though, in the view of some, marred by the supernatural element upon which it was founded. It was at the instance of Lady Dalkeith that Scott undertook to write a poem on the legend of Gilpin Horner, the Goblin Page, but he very soon found that he had undertaken an unmanageable subject. In a letter to Miss Seward, Scott writes:—"At length the story appeared so uncouth that I was fain to put it into the mouth of my old minstrel, lest the nature of it should be misunderstood, and I should be suspected of setting up a new school of poetry instead of a feeble attempt to imitate the old. In the process of the romance, the page, intended to be a principal person in the work, contrived (from the baseness of his natural propensities, I suppose) to slink down-stairs into the kitchen, and now he must e'en abide there." "I venture to say," says Mr. Hutton, "that no reader of the poem ever has distinctly understood what the goblin page did or did not do, what it was that was 'lost' throughout the poem and 'found' at the conclusion, what was the object of his personating the young heir of the house of Scott, and whether or not that object was answered;—what use, if any, the magic book of Michael Scott was to the lady of Branksome, or whether it was only harm to her; and I doubt, moreover, whether any one ever cared an iota what answer, or whether any answer, might be given to any of these questions. All this, as Scott himself clearly perceived, was left confused, and

not simply vague. The goblin imp had been more certainly an imp of mischief to him than even to his boyish ancestor." Professor Minto, in his introduction to Scott's poems, thus refers to this question:—"The fact that most critics of the "Lay" have treated the Goblin as an extraneous character, forced on the story without having any vital connection with it, can be explained only by the supposition that readers have taken the superstitious element in the "Lay" less seriously than Scott himself did. Jeffrey led the way in his first criticism by describing the Goblin Page as an excrescence; and ever since it has been customary to say that his grotesque pranks have no comprehensible bearing on the action. Scott himself, in accordance with his resolution never to reply to criticism, humorously acquiesced when told that his Goblin had no sufficient *raison d'être;* but his supernatural machinery is really very closely jointed into the movement of human affairs in his story. The Goblin's pranks in the kitchen are episodical, but the incidents on which the story turns are all brought about by his help. His prying into the mighty book of Michael Scott; his secret return of the wounded and stunned Deloraine to the castle; his luring away of the heir of Buccleuch to fall into English hands; his substitution of Cranstoun for Deloraine in the combat are all necessary links in the main chain of events. The discourse between the River Spirit and the Mountain Spirit; the Lady's knowledge of this through her witchcraft; her determination to baffle Fate with the help of Michael Scott's mighty book; the irony with which this instrument is turned against her; her vengeance on the Goblin whose impish tricks

have marred her plans, are all essential parts of the tale as told, and must all be taken seriously if we are to read it in the spirit in which it was conceived. It was meant to be 'a tale of wonder,' as well as a tale of rugged characters and picturesque adventures." But however this may be with regard to the supernatural part of the poem, happily there remains enough of natural beauty, vigour, and romance to give it a vital human interest to the reader. The introduction of the old harper is the occasion of some of the tenderest and most sympathetic of all Scott's poetry.

The midnight ride of Deloraine in Canto I. shows Scott's true style at his best. In the picture of Branksome Towers and the gathering of the clans, Cantos III. and IV., he demonstrates the descriptive powers which afterwards achieved so much, and in the story of the Combat, Canto V., displays the marvellous facility with which he was at all times able to infuse with the very breath of life the dry bones of a mouldering tradition.

In 1808 appeared "Marmion," the greatest of all Scott's poems, and truly a magnificently chivalrous effort. Composed largely in the saddle, the story moves along to the time beat of the horse's hoofs. The description of the camp at Edinburgh, Cantos IV. and V., and the battle of Flodden Field, Canto VI., are among the finest creations of Scott's genius.

"Marmion" was followed in 1810 by "The Lady of the Lake," his most popular poem, a poem which took the whole world by storm, and brought half of it to worship the genius of its author among the hills and lakes he had called from darkness into light; the "Lady of the Lake" opened up to the

sightseers of Europe and America, the wild beauty of an hitherto unknown country, and such was the result of the revelation that it is said that "fair Ellen's Isle" was "almost denuded of flowers and ferns by enthusiastic tourists." The description of the Chase, Canto I., the meeting and fight of Fitz-James and Roderick Dhu, Cantos IV. and V., and the Battle of Beal' an Duine," Canto VI., show the poet's powers unimpaired, though his later poems show a wearying hand and an exhausted vein. The year 1811 produced "The Vision of Don Roderick;" 1812-13 "Rokeby" and "The Bridal of Triermain;" 1814-15 "The Lord of the Isles," and "The Field of Waterloo;" and 1816-17 "Harold the Dauntless," and these, with a few dramatic pieces,—with the exception of the incidental poetry of his novels—comprise the whole of his contributions to the national poetry.

From this time forward Scott's name dropped for a time from public association with authorship. It was the period of the anonymous "Waverley Novels," which were produced with so much rapidity as to convince the public that more than one writer was engaged on their production. Though actively canvassed, the secret was well kept. Those thoroughly familiar with Scott's previous work could hardly help but recognise the magic of his hand. Professor Wilson quoted the prose of "The Minstrelsy," and the Ettrick Shepherd is said to have had his copy of "Waverley" rebound and lettered "by Walter Scott." It was not, however, until later in life, that at the annual dinner of the Theatrical Fund Association in 1827, the poet-novelist, in responding to the toast of his own health, amid enthusiastic cheering, "owned the soft impeachment,"

and admitted the responsibility of authorship. During this time, too, he was busily superintending the development of Abbotsford, extending its borders, and ordering its hospitality with princely extravagance. In 1820 he received his baronetcy, and was at the height of his popularity. Six years later Messrs. Constable stopped payment, and this was followed by the failure of the Ballantynes, in whose downfall Scott was hopelessly involved. Then followed the terrible struggle to retrieve the fallen fortunes of the house. Too honourable to accept relief in bankruptcy, Scott determined with his own pen to strike out the obligations of the firm. In two years he raised no less than £40,000 for this purpose. It was not given to the great-hearted poet to see the extinction of these obligations, but in the six years which remained to him he cleared off more than half of the whole amount. It is gratifying to reflect, however, that that which he did not live to do, his works survived to accomplish. £54,000 still remained unpaid at Scott's death, against which £22,000, secured by life insurance, and other smaller sums, together with £30,000 advanced by Mr. Cadell, his publisher, on the security of his copyrights, sufficed to pay off his general creditors in full. In 1847, in exchange for the remaining copyrights, Mr. Cadell gave a full discharge of all claims, and Abbotsford was once more free. 1826 was a terrible year to him. It was the year of his reverses and the year of his wife's death. In 1827 he published his "Life of Napoleon," followed by "The Chronicles of the Canongate," "Tales of a Grandfather," "The Fair Maid of Perth," "Ann of Geierstein," a "History

of Scotland," "Letters on Demonology;" and in 1831 by the last of his works, "Count Robert" and "Castle Dangerous."

The enormous tension of the last five years had, however, done its work, and in 1830 he had a paralytic stroke, after which he was, with difficulty, persuaded to give up literary work. It was at this time that Wordsworth visited him at Abbotsford, before his departure on a Continental tour, in search of restoration, which visit Wordsworth commemorated in the familiar sonnet (see p. 341) commencing—

> "A trouble, not of clouds, or weeping rain,
> Nor of the setting sun's pathetic light,
> Engendered, hangs on Eildon's triple height."

A few months spent on the Continent failed to do much for him, and he returned to Abbotsford, where on September 21st, 1832, to quote Lockhart, "about half-past one in the afternoon, on a glorious autumn day, with every window wide open, and the ripple of the Tweed over its pebbles distinctly audible in his room, he passed away."

The characteristics of Scott's work are the characteristics of his own nature. Simple, vigorous, and high-minded in himself, his work is everywhere free, bold, and chivalrous. Incapable of meanness in his own conduct, he gave a high tone to the conduct of his characters; and romantic in his own tastes and sympathies, he spread the glamour of romanticism over even the unromantic details of his fascinating pages. In a letter to a lady correspondent he described himself as "a rattle-skulled, half lawyer, half sportsman, through whose head a regiment of horse has been exercising since he was

five years old;" and, again he says, "I must own that to one who has, like myself, *la tête un peu exaltée*, the pomp and circumstance of war gives, for a time, a very poignant and pleasing sensation." As might be expected of one who would thus describe himself, the field and the chase were ever the chief delights of both mind and body, and it is as the poet of war and of the open air, that he achieved the distinction in which he stands alone. Nothing that the most enthusiastic critic could have written would have gratified the poet half so much as the simple fact given in the following words by his literary executor: "In the course of the day when the 'Lady of the Lake' first reached Sir Adam Ferguson, he was posted with his company on a point of ground exposed to the enemy's artillery, somewhere, no doubt, in the lines of Torres Vedras. The men were ordered to lie prostrate on the ground; while they kept that attitude, the captain, kneeling at their head, read aloud the description of the battle in Canto VI., and the listening soldiers only interrupted him by a joyous huzza when the French shot struck the bank close above them."

Though it is as a war poet that Scott achieves his distinctive place among the poets, there is nothing mean or cruel about his warfare. It may often be fighting for fighting's sake, but it is force against force, and skill against skill, on a fair field and without favour, and with an even balance, held in a hand that honours courage and manly virtue equally wherever it is displayed. Unlike Wordsworth, Byron, and others, he never stops to moralise, nor attempts to deal with the workings of the human mind. His world was a world of action

in which there was too much movement to permit reflection; but if his mind does not stop to moralise his heart beats all through; and side by side with the progress of his story, there is a moral force working which the reader cannot fail to feel. Though he tells his stories for the sake of telling them and leaves them without comment when they are complete, he shows so much of high courtesy and noble bearing, that while the record lingers in the mind, the reader cannot but be stirred to manly courage, to heroic fortitude, and to a chivalrous generosity in his treatment of both friend and foe. His imagination was of the highest order; his powers of description have been rarely equalled and never surpassed; he was a master of dramatic situation and of the grouping of circumstances, and if he did not deal in the analysis of character and the workings of the mind, it was because the vigour of his imagination brooked no delay, and hurried him with torrent force from cause to consequence, from reason to result. His diction was facile to a fault, and probably in the ease with which he wrote, we have the cause of the want of finish which is often apparent, and which could hardly be excused in the treatment of more polished themes. He maintained a more even level than either Wordsworth or Byron, and if he never soared so high, never sank so low. Altogether, he has left us a rich store of noble, manly verse, which must always awaken a responsive throb of sympathy in simple vigorous hearts, and may even fire the conquests of generations yet unborn.

ALFRED H. MILES.

THE LAY OF THE LAST MINSTREL.

1805.

SIR WALTER SCOTT.

I.

INTRODUCTION.

THE way was long, the wind was cold,
The Minstrel was infirm and old;
His wither'd cheek, and tresses gray,
Seem'd to have known a better day;
The harp, his sole remaining joy,
Was carried by an orphan boy.

The last of all the Bards was he,
Who sung of Border chivalry;
For, well-a-day! their date was fled,
His tuneful brethren all were dead;
And he, neglected and oppress'd,
Wish'd to be with them, and at rest.

No more on prancing palfrey borne
He caroll'd, light as lark at morn;
No longer courted and caress'd,
High placed in hall, a welcome guest,
He pour'd to lord and lady gay,
The unpremeditated lay:
Old times were changed, old manners gone,
A stranger fill'd the Stuarts' throne;

The bigots of the iron time
Had call'd his harmless art a crime.
A wandering Harper, scorn'd and poor,
He begg'd his bread from door to door,
And tuned, to please a peasant's ear,
The harp, a king had loved to hear.

He pass'd where Newark's stately tower
Looks out from Yarrow's birchin bower :
The Minstrel gazed with wishful eye—
No humbler resting-place was nigh :
With hesitating step, at last,
The embattled portal arch he pass'd,
Whose ponderous grate and massy bar
Had oft roll'd back the tide of war,
But never closed the iron door
Against the desolate and poor.

The Duchess [1] mark'd his weary pace,
His timid mien, and reverend face,
And bade her page the menials tell,
That they should tend the old man well:
For she had known adversity,
Though born in such a high degree ;
In pride of power, in beauty's bloom,
Had wept o'er Monmouth's bloody tomb.

When kindness had his wants supplied,
And the old man was gratified,
Began to rise his minstrel pride:
And he began to talk anon,
Of good Earl Francis,[2] dead and gone,
And of Earl Walter,[3] rest him, God!
A braver ne'er to battle rode :

And how full many a tale he knew
Of the old warriors of Buccleuch;
And, would the noble Duchess deign
To listen to an old man's strain,
Though stiff his hand, his voice though weak
He thought even yet, the sooth to speak,
That, if she loved the harp to hear,
He could make music to her ear.

The humble boon was soon obtain'd:
The aged Minstrel audience gain'd.
But, when he reach'd the room of state,
Where she, with all her ladies, sate,
Perchance he wish'd his boon denied:
For, when to tune his harp he tried,
His trembling hand had lost the ease
Which marks security to please;
And scenes, long past, of joy and pain,
Came wildering o'er his aged brain—
He tried to tune his harp in vain!
The pitying Duchess praised its chime,
And gave him heart, and gave him time,
Till every string's according glee
Was blended into harmony.
And then, he said, he would full fain
He could recall an ancient strain,
He never thought to sing again.
It was not framed for village churls,
But for high dames and mighty earls:
He had play'd it to King Charles the Good,
When he kept Court in Holyrood;
And much he wish'd, yet fear'd, to try
The long-forgotten melody.

Amid the strings his fingers stray'd,
And an uncertain warbling made,
And oft he shook his hoary head.
But when he caught the measure wild,
The old man raised his face, and smiled;
And lighten'd up his faded eye,
With all a poet's ecstasy!

In varying cadence, soft or strong,
He swept the sounding chords along:
The present scene, the future lot—
His toils, his wants,—were all forgot:
Cold diffidence, and ages' frost,
In the full tide of song were lost;
Each blank, in faithless memory void,
The poet's glowing thought supplied;
And, while his harp responsive rung,
'Twas thus the LATEST MINSTREL sung.

II.

DELORAINE'S RIDE.

Canto I.

I.

THE feast was over in Branksome Tower,
And the Ladye had gone to her secret bower;
Her bower that was guarded by word and by spell,
Deadly to hear, and deadly to tell—
Jesu Maria, shield us well!
No living wight, save the Ladye alone,
Had dared to cross the threshold stone.

II.

The tables were drawn, it was idlesse all;
Knight, and page, and household squire,
Loiter'd through the lofty hall,
Or crowded round the ample fire.
The stag-hounds, weary with the chase,
Lay stretch'd upon the rushy floor,
And urged, in dreams, the forest race,
From Teviot-stone to Eskdale-moor.

III.

Nine-and-twenty knights of fame
Hung their shields in Branksome-Hall;
Nine-and-twenty squires of name
Brought them their steeds to bower from stall;
Nine-and-twenty yeomen tall
Waited, duteous, on them all:
They were all knights of mettle true,
Kinsmen to the bold Buccleuch.

IV.

Ten of them were sheathed in steel,
With belted sword, and spur on heel:
They quitted not their harness bright,
Neither by day, nor yet by night:
They lay down to rest
With corslet laced,
Pillow'd on buckler cold and hard;
They carved at the meal
With gloves of steel,
And they drank the red wine through the helmet barr'd.

V.

Ten squires, ten yeomen, mail-clad men,
Waited the beck of the warders ten;
Thirty steeds, both fleet and wight,
Stood saddled in stable day and night,
Barbed with frontlet of steel, I trow,
And with Jedwood-axe at saddle-bow;
A hundred more fed free in stall:—
Such was the custom of Branksome-Hall.

VI.

Why do these steeds stand ready dight?
Why watch these warriors, armed, by night?—
They watch, to hear the blood-hound baying;
They watch, to hear the war-horn braying;—
To see St. George's red-cross streaming,—
To see the midnight beacon gleaming;
They watch, against Southern force and guile,
Lest Scroop, or Howard, or Percy's powers,
Threaten Branksome's lordly towers,
From Warkworth, or Naworth, or merry Carlisle.

VII.

Such is the custom of Branksome-Hall.
Many a valiant knight is here;
But he, the Chieftain of them all,
His sword hangs rusting on the wall,
Beside his broken spear.
Bards long shall tell
How Lord Walter fell!
When startled burghers fled, afar,
The furies of the Border war;
When the streets of high Dunedin
Saw lances gleam, and falchions redden,
And heard the slogan's deadly yell—
Then the Chief of Branksome fell.

VIII.

Can piety the discord heal,
Or stanch the death-feud's enmity?
Can Christian lore, can patriot zeal,
Can love of blessed charity?
No! vainly to each holy shrine,
In mutual pilgrimage, they drew;
Implored, in vain, the grace divine
For chiefs, their own red falchions slew:
While Cessford owns the rule of Carr,
While Ettrick boasts the line of Scott,
The slaughter'd chiefs, the mortal jar,
The havoc of the feudal war,
Shall never, never be forgot!

IX.

In sorrow, o'er Lord Walter's bier,
The warlike foresters had bent;
And many a flower, and many a tear,
Old Teviot's maids and matrons lent:

But o'er her warrior's bloody bier
The Ladye dropp'd nor flower nor tear!
Vengeance, deep-brooding o'er the slain,
Had lock'd the source of softer woe;
And burning pride, and high disdain,
Forbade the rising tear to flow;
Until, amid his sorrowing clan,
Her son lisp'd from the nurse's knee—
"And, if I live to be a man,
My father's death revenged shall be!"
Then fast the mother's tears did seek
To dew the infant's kindling cheek.

X.

All loose her negligent attire,
All loose her golden hair,
Hung Margaret o'er her slaughter'd sire,
And wept in wild despair.
But not alone the bitter tear
Had filial grief supplied;
For hopeless love, and anxious fear,
Had lent their mingled tide:
Nor in her mother's alter'd eye
Dared she to look for sympathy.
Her lover, 'gainst her father's clan,
With Carr in arms had stood,
When Mathouse-burn to Melrose ran,
All purple with their blood;
And well she knew, her mother dread,
Before Lord Cranstoun she should wed,
Would see her on her dying bed.

XI.

Of noble race the Ladye came,
Her father was a clerk of fame,

Of Bethune's line of Picardie:
He learn'd the art that none may name,
In Padua, far beyond the sea.
Men said, he changed his mortal frame
By feat of magic mystery;
For when, in studious mood, he paced
St. Andrew's cloistered hall,
His form no darkening shadow traced
Upon the sunny wall!

XII.

And of his skill, as bards avow,
He taught that Ladye fair,
Till to her bidding she could bow
The viewless forms of air.
And now she sits in secret bower,
In old Lord David's western tower,
And listens to a heavy sound,
That moans the mossy turrets round.
Is it the roar of Teviot's tide,
That chafes against the scaurs'[4] red side?
Is it the wind that swings the oaks?
Is it the echo from the rocks?
What may it be, the heavy sound,
That moans old Branksome's turrets round?

XIII.

At the sullen, moaning sound,
The ban-dogs bay and howl;
And, from the turrets round,
Loud whoops the startled owl.
In the hall, both squire and knight
Swore that a storm was near,
And looked forth to view the night;
But the night was still and clear!

XIV.

From the sound of Teviot's tide,
Chafing with the mountain's side,
From the groan of the wind-swung oak,
From the sullen echo of the rock,
From the voice of the coming storm,
The Ladye knew it well!
It was the Spirit of the Flood that spoke,
And he call'd on the Spirit of the Fell.

XV.

River Spirit.

"Sleep'st thou, brother?—"

Mountain Spirit.

—"Brother, nay;—
On my hills the moonbeams play.—
From Craik-cross to Skelfhill-pen,
By every rill, in every glen,
Merry elves their morrice pacing,
To aërial minstrelsy,
Emerald rings on brown heath tracing,
Trip it deft and merrily.
Up, and mark their nimble feet!
Up, and list their music sweet!"

XVI.

River Spirit.

"Tears of an imprison'd maiden
Mix with my polluted stream;
Margaret of Branksome, sorrow-laden,
Mourns beneath the moon's pale beam.
Tell me, thou, who view'st the stars,
When shall cease these feudal jars?
What shall be the maiden's fate?
Who shall be the maiden's mate?"

XVII.

Mountain Spirit.

"Arthur's slow wain his course doth roll,
In utter darkness, round the pole;
The Northern Bear lowers black and grim;
Orion's studded belt is dim;
Twinkling faint, and distant far,
Shimmers through mist each planet star;
Ill may I read their high decree!
But no kind influence deign they shower
On Teviot's tide, and Branksome's tower,
Till pride be quell'd, and love be free."

XVIII.

The unearthly voices ceast,
And the heavy sound was still;
It died on the river's breast,
It died on the side of the hill.
But round Lord David's tower
The sound still floated near;
For it rung in the Ladye's bower,
And it rung in the Ladye's ear.
She raised her stately head,
And her heart throbb'd high with pride:—
"Your mountains shall bend,
And your streams ascend,
Ere Margaret be our foeman's bride!"

XIX.

The Ladye sought the lofty hall,
Where many a bold retainer lay,
And, with jocund din, among them all,
Her son pursued his infant play.
A fancied moss-trooper, the boy
The truncheon of a spear bestrode,

And round the hall, right merrily,
In mimic foray rode.
Even bearded knights, in arms grown old,
Share in his frolic-gambols bore,
Albeit their hearts, of rugged mould,
Were stubborn as the steel they wore.
For the gray warriors prophesied,
How the brave boy, in future war,
Should tame the Unicorn's pride,
Exalt the Crescent and the Star.

XX.

The Ladye forgot her purpose high
One moment, and no more;
One moment gazed with a mother's eye
As she paused at the arched door;
Then, from amid the armed train,
She call'd to her William of Deloraine.

XXI.

A stark moss-trooping Scott was he,
As e'er couch'd border lance by knee:
Through Solway sands, through Tarras moss,
Blindfold, he knew the paths to cross:
By wily turns, by desperate bounds,
Had baffled Percy's best blood-hounds;
In Eske, or Liddel, fords were none,
But he would ride them, one by one;
Alike to him was time or tide,
December's snow or July's pride:
Alike to him was tide or time,
Moonless midnight, or matin prime:
Steady of heart, and stout of hand,
As ever drove prey from Cumberland;

Five times outlawed had he been,
By England's King, and Scotland's Queen.

XXII.

"Sir William of Deloraine, good at need,
Mount thee on the wightest steed;
Spare not to spur, nor stint to ride,
Until thou come to fair Tweedside;
And in Melrose's holy pile
Seek thou the Monk of St. Mary's aisle.
Greet the father well from me:
Say, that the fated hour is come,
And to-night he shall watch with thee,
To win the treasure of the tomb:
For this will be St. Michael's night,
And, though stars be dim, the moon is bright;
And the Cross, of bloody red,
Will point to the grave of the mighty dead.

XXIII.

"What he gives thee, see thou keep;
Stay not thou for food or sleep:
Be it scroll, or be it book,
Into it, Knight, thou must not look;
If thou readest, thou art lorn!
Better had'st thou ne'er been born."—

XXIV.

"O swiftly can speed my dapple-gray steed,
Which drinks of the Teviot clear;
Ere break of day," the Warrior 'gan say,
"Again will I be here:
And safer by none may thy errand be done,
Than, noble dame, by me;
Letter nor line know I never a one,
Wer't my neck-verse at Hairibee." [5]

XXV.

Soon in his saddle sate he fast,
And soon the steep descent he past,
Soon cross'd the sounding barbican,[6]
And soon the Teviot side he won.
Eastward the wooded path he rode;
Green hazels o'er his basnet nod;
He pass'd the Peel[7] of Goldiland,
And cross'd old Borthwick's roaring strand;
Dimly he viewed the Moat-hill's mound,
Where Druid shades still flitted round:
In Hawick twinkled many a light;
Behind him soon they set in night;
And soon he spurr'd his courser keen
Beneath the tower of Hazeldean.

XXVI.

The clattering hoofs the watchmen mark:—
"Stand, ho! thou courier of the dark."
"For Branksome, ho!" the knight rejoin'd,
And left the friendly tower behind.
He turned him now from Teviotside,
And, guided by the tinkling rill,
Northward the dark ascent did ride,
And gained the moor at Horsliehill;
Broad on the left before him lay,
For many a mile, the Roman way.[8]

XXVII.

A moment now he slack'd his speed,
A moment breathed his panting steed;
Drew saddle-girth and corslet-band,
And loosen'd in the sheath his brand.

On Minto-crags the moonbeams glint,
Where Barnhill hewed his bed of flint;
Who flung his outlawed limbs to rest,
Where falcons hang their giddy nest,
Mid cliffs, from whence his eagle-eye
For many a league his prey could spy;
Cliffs, doubling, on their echoes borne,
The terrors of the robber's horn;
Cliffs, which, for many a later year,
The warbling Doric reed shall hear,
When some sad swain shall teach the grove,
Ambition is no cure for love!

XXVIII.

Unchallenged, thence pass'd Deloraine,
To ancient Riddel's fair domain,
Where Aill, from mountains freed,
Down from the lakes did raving come:
Each wave was crested with tawny foam,
Like the mane of a chestnut steed.
In vain! no torrent, deep or broad,
Might bar the bold moss-trooper's road.

XXIX.

At the first plunge the horse sunk low,
And the water broke o'er the saddle-bow;
Above the foaming tide, I ween,
Scarce half the charger's neck was seen;
For he was barded [9] from counter to tail,
And the rider was armed complete in mail;
Never heavier man and horse
Stemm'd a midnight torrent's force.
The warrior's very plume, I say,
Was daggled by the dashing spray;

Yet, through good heart, and Our Ladye's grace,
At length he gained the landing-place.

XXX.

Now Bowden Moor the march-man won,
And sternly shook his plumed head,
As glanced his eye o'er Halidon;
For on his soul the slaughter red
Of that unhallow'd morn arose,
When first the Scott and Carr were foes;
When royal James beheld the fray,
Prize to the victor of the day;
When Home and Douglas, in the van,
Bore down Buccleuch's retiring clan,
Till gallant Cessford's heart-blood dear
Reeked on dark Elliot's Border spear.

XXXI.

In bitter mood he spurred fast,
And soon the hated heath was past;
And far beneath, in lustre wan,
Old Melros' rose, and fair Tweed ran:
Like some tall rock, with lichens gray,
Seemed, dimly huge, the dark Abbaye.
When Hawick he pass'd, had curfew rung,
Now midnight lauds [10] were in Melrose sung.
The sound, upon the fitful gale,
In solemn wise did rise and fail,
Like that wild harp, whose magic tone
Is waken'd by the winds alone.
But when Melrose he reach'd, 'twas silence all;
He meetly stabled his steed in stall,
And sought the convent's lonely wall.

MARMION.

1808.

SIR WALTER SCOTT.

I.

THE CAMP.

FROM CANTO IV.

(XXIII.)

EARLY they took Dun-Edin's road,
And I could trace each step they trode;
Hill, brook, nor dell, nor rock, nor stone,
Lies on the path to me unknown.
Much might it boast of storied lore;
But, passing such digression o'er,
Suffice it that their route was laid
Across the furzy hills of Braid.
They pass'd the glen and scanty rill
And climb'd the opposing bank, until
They gain'd the top of Blackford Hill.

(XXIV.)

Blackford! on whose uncultured breast,
Among the broom, and thorn, and whin,
A truant-boy, I sought the nest,
Or listed, as I lay at rest,

While rose, on breezes thin,
The murmur of the city crowd,
And, from his steeple jangling loud,
Saint Giles's mingling din.
Now, from the summit to the plain,
Waves all the hill with yellow grain;
And o'er the landscape as I look,
Nought do I see unchanged remain,
Save the rude cliffs and chiming brook.
To me they make a heavy moan,
Of early friendships past and gone.

(xxv.)

But different far the change has been,[11]
Since Marmion, from the crown
Of Blackford, saw that martial scene
Upon the bent so brown:
Thousand pavilions, white as snow,
Spread all the Borough-moor[12] below,
Upland, and dale, and down:—
A thousand did I say? I ween,
Thousands on thousands there were seen,
That chequer'd all the heath between
The streamlet and the town;
In crossing ranks extending far,
Forming a camp irregular;
Oft giving way, where still there stood
Some relics of the old oak wood,
That darkly huge did intervene,
And tamed the glaring white with green:
In these extended lines there lay
A martial kingdom's vast array.

(XXVI.)

For from Hebudes, dark with rain,
To eastern Lodon's fertile plain,
And from the southern Redswire edge,
To farthest Rosse's rocky ledge;
From west to east, from south to north,
Scotland sent all her warriors forth.
Marmion might hear the mingled hum
Of myriads up the mountain come;
The horses' tramp, and tingling clank,
Where chiefs reviewed their vassal rank,
And charger's shrilling neigh;
And see the shifting lines advance,
While frequent flash'd, from shield and lance,
The sun's reflected ray.

(XXVII.)

Thin curling in the morning air,
The wreaths of failing smoke declare
To embers now the brands decayed,
Where the night-watch their fires had made.
They saw, slow rolling on the plain,
Full many a baggage-cart and wain,
And dire artillery's clumsy car,
By sluggish oxen tugg'd to war;
And there were Borthwick's Sisters Seven,[12]
And culverins which France had given.
Ill-omened gift! the guns remain
The conqueror's spoil on Flodden plain.

(XXVIII.)

Nor mark'd they less, where in the air
A thousand streamers flaunted fair;

Various in shape, device, and hue,
Green, sanguine, purple, red, and blue,
Broad, narrow, swallow-tail'd, and square,
Scroll, pennon, pensil, bandrol, there
O'er the pavilions flew.
Highest, and midmost, was descried
The royal banner floating wide;
The staff, a pine-tree strong and straight,
Pitch'd deeply in a massive stone—
Which still in memory is shown—
Yet bent beneath the standard's weight
Whene'er the western wind unroll'd,
With toil, the huge and cumbrous fold,
And gave to view the dazzling field,
Where, in proud Scotland's royal shield,
The ruddy lion ramp'd in gold.

(XXIX.)

Lord Marmion view'd the landscape bright—
He view'd it with a chief's delight—
Until within him burn'd his heart,
And lightning from his eye did part,
As on the battle-day;
Such glance did falcon never dart,
When stooping on his prey.
"Oh! well, Lord-Lion, hast thou said,
Thy king from warfare to dissuade
Were but a vain essay:
For, by Saint George, were that host mine,
Not power infernal, nor divine,
Should once to peace my soul incline,
Till I had dimm'd their armour's shine
In glorious battle-fray!"

Answer'd the bard, of milder mood:
"Fair is the sight—and yet 'twere good
That kings would think withal,
When peace and wealth their land has bless'd,
'Tis better to sit still at rest,
Than rise, perchance to fall."

(xxx.)

Still on the spot Lord Marmion stay'd,
For fairer scene he ne'er survey'd.
When sated with the martial show
That peopled all the plain below,
The wandering eye could o'er it go,
And mark the distant city glow
With gloomy splendour red;
For on the smoke-wreaths, huge and slow,
That round her sable turrets flow,
The morning beams were shed,
And tinged them with a lustre proud,
Like that which streaks a thunder-cloud.
Such dusky grandeur clothed the height,
Where the huge castle holds its state,
And all the steep slope down,
Whose ridgy back heaves to the sky,
Piled deep and massy, close and high,
Mine own romantic town!
But northward far, with purer blaze,
On Ochil mountains fell the rays,
And as each heathy top they kiss'd,
It gleamed a purple amethyst.
Yonder the shores of Fife you saw;
Here Preston-Bay and Berwick-Law:

And, broad between them roll'd,
The gallant Frith the eye might note,
Whose islands on its bosom float,
Like emeralds chased in gold.
Fitz-Eustace' heart felt closely pent;
As if to give his rapture vent,
The spur he to his charger lent,
And raised his bridle hand,
And making demi-volte in air,
Cried, "Where's the coward that would not dare
To fight for such a land!"
The Lindesay smiled his joy to see;
Nor Marmion's frown repressed his glee.

(XXXI.)

Thus while they look'd, a flourish proud,
Where mingled trump and clarion loud,
And fife and kettle-drum,
And sackbut deep, and psaltery,
And war-pipe with discordant cry,
And cymbal clattering to the sky,
Making wild music bold and high,
Did up the mountain come;
The whilst the bells, with distant chime,
Merrily toll'd the hour of prime,
And thus the Lindesay spoke:
"Thus clamour still the war-notes when
The King to mass his way has ta'en,
Or to St. Katharine's of Sienne,
Or chapel of Saint Rocque.
To you they speak of martial fame;
But me remind of peaceful game,
When blither was their cheer,

Thrilling in Falkland-woods the air,
In signal none his steed should spare,
But strive which foremost might repair
To the downfall of the deer.

(XXXII.)

"Nor less," he said, "when looking forth,
I view yon Empress of the North
Sit on her hilly throne;
Her palace's imperial bowers,
Her castle, proof to hostile powers,
Her stately halls and holy towers—
Nor less," he said, "I moan,
To think what woe mischance may bring,
And how these merry bells may ring
The death-dirge of our gallant king;
Or with the 'larum call
The burghers forth to watch and ward,
'Gainst southern sack and fires to guard
Dun-Edin's leaguer'd wall.—
But not for my presaging thought,
Dream conquest sure, or cheaply bought!
Lord Marmion, I say nay:
God is the guider of the field,
He breaks the champion's spear and shield,—
But thou thyself shalt say,
When joins yon host in deadly stowre,
That England's dames must weep in bower,
Her monks the death-mass sing;
For never saw'st thou such a power
Led on by such a king."—

II.

THE BATTLE OF FLODDEN FIELD.

From Canto VI.

(xviii.)

* * *

Next morn the Baron climb'd the tower,
To view afar the Scottish power,
Encamp'd on Flodden edge;
The white pavilions made a show,
Like remnants of the winter snow,
Along the dusky ridge.
Long Marmion look'd:—at length his eye
Unusual movement might descry
Amid the shifting lines:
The Scottish host drawn out appears,
For, flashing on the hedge of spears
The eastern sunbeam shines.
Their front now deepening, now extending;
Their flank inclining, wheeling, bending,
Now drawing back, and now descending,
The skilful Marmion well could know,
They watch'd the motions of some foe,
Who traversed on the plain below.

(xix.)

Even so it was. From Flodden ridge
The Scots beheld the English host
Leave Barmore-Wood, their evening post,
And heedful watch'd them as they cross'd
The Till by Twisel Bridge.
High sight it is, and haughty, while
They dive into the deep defile;

Beneath the cavern'd cliff they fall,
Beneath the castle's airy wall.
By rock, by oak, by hawthorn-tree,
Troop after troop are disappearing;
Troop after troop their banners rearing
Upon the eastern bank you see.
Still pouring down the rocky den,
Where flows the sullen Till,
And rising from the dim-wood glen,
Standards on standards, men on men,
In slow succession still,
And, sweeping o'er the Gothic arch,
And pressing on, in ceaseless march,
To gain the opposing hill.
That morn, to many a trumpet clang,
Twisel! thy rocks deep echo rang;
And many a chief of birth and rank,
Saint Helen! at thy fountain drank.
Thy hawthorn glade, which now we see
In spring-tide bloom so lavishly,
Had then from many an axe its doom,
To give the marching columns room.

(XX.)

And why stands Scotland idly now,
Dark Flodden! on thy airy brow,
Since England gains the pass the while,
And struggles through the deep defile?
What checks the fiery soul of James?
Why sits that champion of the dames
Inactive on his steed,
And sees, between him and his land,
Between him and Tweed's southern strand,
His host Lord Surrey lead?

What 'vails the vain knight-errant's brand!—
Oh, Douglas, for thy leading wand!
Fierce Randolph, for thy speed!
Oh, for one hour of Wallace wight,
Or well-skill'd Bruce, to rule the fight,
And cry,—"St. Andrew and our right!"
Another sight had seen that morn,
From Fate's dark book a leaf been torn,
And Flodden had been Bannockbourne!
The precious hour has pass'd in vain,
And England's host has gain'd the plain;
Wheeling their march, and circling still,
Around the base of Flodden Hill.

(XXI.)

Ere yet the bands met Marmion's eye,[14]
Fitz-Eustace shouted loud and high,
"Hark! hark! my lord, an English drum!
And see ascending squadrons come
Between Tweed's river and the hill,
Foot, horse, and cannon:—hap what hap,
My basnet to a 'prentice cap,
Lord Surrey's o'er the Till!—
Yet more! yet more!—how far array'd
They file from out the hawthorn shade,
And sweep so gallant by![15]
With all their banners bravely spread,
And all their armour flashing high,
Saint George might waken from the dead,
To see fair England's standards fly."—
"Stint in thy prate," quoth Blount, "thou'dst best,
And listen to our lord's behest."
With kindling brow Lord Marmion said,—
"This instant be our band array'd;

The river must be quickly cross'd,
That we may join Lord Surrey's host.
If fight King James,—as well I trust,
That fight he will, and fight he must,—
The Lady Clare behind our lines
Shall tarry, while the battle joins."

(XXII.)

Himself he swift on horseback threw,
Scarce to the Abbot bade adieu;
Far less would listen to his prayer,
To leave behind the helpless Clare.
Down to the Tweed his band he drew,
And mutter'd, as the flood they view,
"The pheasant in the falcon's claw,
He scarce will yield to please a daw:
Lord Angus may the Abbot awe,
So Clare shall bide with me."
Then on that dangerous ford, and deep,
Where to the Tweed Leat's eddies creep,
He ventured desperately:
And not a moment will he bide,
Till squire, or groom before him ride;
Headmost of all he stems the tide,
And stems it gallantly.
Eustace held Clare upon her horse,
Old Hubert led her rein,
Stoutly they braved the current's course,
And though far downward driven per force,
The southern bank they gain;
Behind them, straggling, came to shore,
As best they might, the train;
Each o'er his head his yew-bow bore,
A caution not in vain;

Deep need that day that every string,
By wet unharm'd, should sharply ring.
A moment then Lord Marmion staid,
And breathed his steed, his men array'd,
  Then forward moved his band,
Until, Lord Surrey's rear-guard won,
He halted by a cross of stone,
That, on a hillock standing lone,
  Did all the field command.

(XXIII.)

Hence might they see the full array
Of either host, for deadly fray;
Their marshall'd lines stretch'd east and west,
  And fronted north and south,
And distant salutation pass'd
From the loud cannon mouth;
Not in the close successive rattle,
That breathes the voice of modern battle,
  But slow and far between.—
The hillock gained, Lord Marmion staid:
"Here, by this cross," he gently said,
"You well may view the scene.
Here shalt thou tarry, lovely Clare:
Oh! think of Marmion in thy prayer!—
Thou wilt not? well—no less my care
Shall, watchful, for thy weal prepare.—
You, Blount and Eustace, are her guard,
  With ten pick'd archers of my train;
With England if the day go hard,
  To Berwick speed amain.—
But if we conquer, cruel maid,
My spoils shall at your feet be laid,
  When here we meet again."

He waited not for answer there,
And would not mark the maid's despair,
Nor heed the discontented look [16]
From either squire; but spurr'd amain,
And, dashing through the battle plain,
His way to Surrey took.

(XXIV.)

—"The good Lord Marmion, by my life!
Welcome to danger's hour!—
Short greeting serves in time of strife:—
Thus have I ranged my power:
Myself will rule this central host,
Stout Stanley fronts their right,
My sons command the vaward post,
With Brian Tunstall,[17] stainless knight;
Lord Dacre, with his horsemen light,
Shall be in rear-ward of the fight,
And succour those that need it most.
Now, gallant Marmion, well I know,
Would gladly to the vanguard go;
Edmund, the Admiral, Tunstall there,
With thee their charge would blithely share;
There fight thine own retainers too,
Beneath De Burg, thy steward true."[18]—
"Thanks, noble Surrey!" Marmion said,
Nor farther greeting there he paid;
But, parting like a thunderbolt,
First in the vanguard made a halt,
Where such a shout there rose
Of "Marmion! Marmion!" that the cry
Up Flodden mountain shrilling high,
Startled the Scottish foes.

(xxv.)

Blount and Fitz-Eustace rested still
With Lady Clare upon the hill;
On which (for far the day was spent)
The western sunbeams now were bent.
The cry they heard, its meaning knew,
Could plain their distant comrades view:
Sadly to Blount did Eustace say,
"Unworthy office here to stay!
No hope of gilded spurs to-day.—
But see! look up!—on Flodden bent
The Scottish foe has fired his tent."
And sudden, as he spoke,
From the sharp ridges of the hill,
All downward to the banks of Till,
Was wreathed in sable smoke.
Volumed and fast, and rolling far,
The cloud enveloped Scotland's war,
As down the hill they broke;
Nor marshal shout, nor minstrel tone,
Announced their march; their tread alone,
At times one warning trumpet blown,
At times a stifled hum,
Told England, from his mountain-throne
King James did rushing come.—
Scarce could they hear or see their foes,
Until at weapon-point they close.—
They close, in clouds of smoke and dust,
With sword-sway, and with lance's thrust;
And such a yell was there,
Of sudden and portentous birth,
As if men fought upon the earth,
And fiends in upper air;
Oh! life and death were in the shout,

Recoil and rally, charge and rout,
And triumph and despair.
Long look'd the anxious squires; their eye
Could in the darkness nought descry.

(XXVI.)

At length the freshening western blast
Aside the shroud of battle cast;
And, first, the ridge of mingled spears
Above the brightening cloud appears;
And in the smoke the pennons flew,
As in the storm the white sea-mew.
Then mark'd they, dashing broad and far,
The broken billows of the war,
And plumèd crests of chieftains brave,
Floating like foam upon the wave;
But nought distinct they see:
Wide raged the battle on the plain;
Spears shook, and falchions flash'd amain;
Fell England's arrow-flight like rain;
Crests rose, and stoop'd, and rose again,
Wild and disorderly.
Amid the scene of tumult, high
They saw Lord Marmion's falcon fly:
And stainless Tunstall's banner white,
And Edmund Howard's lion bright,
Still bear them bravely in the fight;
Although against them come,
Of gallant Gordons many a one,
And many a stubborn Badenoch-man,
And many a rugged Border clan,
With Huntly and with Home.

(XXVII.)

Far on the left, unseen the while,
Stanley broke Lennox and Argyle;
Though there the western mountaineer
Rush'd with bare bosom on the spear,
And flung the feeble targe aside.
And with both hands the broadsword plied.
'Twas vain:—But Fortune, on the right,
With fickle smile, cheer'd Scotland's fight.
Then fell that spotless banner white,
The Howard's lion fell;[19]
Yet still Lord Marmion's falcon flew
With wavering flight, while fiercer grew
Around the battle-yell.
The Border slogan rent the sky!
A Home! a Gordon! was the cry:
Loud were the clanging blows;
Advanced—forced back—now low, now high,
The pennon sunk and rose;
As bends the bark's mast in the gale,
When rent are rigging, shrouds, and sail,
It wavered 'mid the foes.
No longer Blount the view could bear:
"By Heaven and all its saints I swear,
I will not see it lost!
Fitz-Eustace, you with Lady Clare
May bid your beads, and patter prayer,—
I gallop to the host."
And to the fray he rode amain,
Follow'd by all the archer train.
The fiery youth with desperate charge,
Made, for a space, an opening large,—
The rescued banner rose—

But darkly closed the war around,
Like pine-tree, rooted from the ground,[20]
It sank among the foes.
Then Eustace mounted too:—yet staid,
As loth to leave the helpless maid,
When, fast as shaft can fly,
Blood-shot his eyes, his nostrils spread,
The loose rein dangling from his head,
Housing and saddle bloody red,
Lord Marmion's steed rush'd by;
And Eustace, maddening at the sight,
A look and sign to Clara cast,
To mark he would return in haste,[21]
Then plunged into the fight.

(XXVIII.)

Ask me not what the maiden feels,
Left in that dreadful hour alone:
Perchance her reason stoops, or reels;
Perchance a courage, not her own,
Braces her mind to desperate tone.—
The scatter'd van of England wheels;—
She only said, as loud in air
The tumult roar'd, "Is Wilton there?"
They fly, or, madden'd by despair,
Fight but to die,—"Is Wilton there?"
With that, straight up the hill there rode
Two horsemen drench'd with gore,
And in their arms, a helpless load,
A wounded knight they bore.
His hand still strain'd the broken brand;
His arms were smear'd with blood and sand.
Dragged from among the horses' feet,
With dinted shield, and helmet beat,

The falcon-crest and plumage gone,
Can that be haughty Marmion !—
Young Blount his armour did unlace,
And, gazing on his ghastly face,
Said—"By Saint George, he's gone!
That spear-wound has our master sped—
And see, the deep cut on his head!
Good-night to Marmion."
"Unnurtured Blount! thy brawling cease:
He opes his eyes," said Eustace; "peace!"

(XXIX.)

When, doff'd his casque, he felt free air,[22]
Around 'gan Marmion wildly stare:—
"Where's Harry Blount? Fitz-Eustace where?
Linger ye here, ye hearts of hare!
Redeem my pennon,—charge again!
Cry—'Marmion to the rescue!'—Vain!
Last of my race, on battle-plain
That shout shall ne'er be heard again!—
Yet my last thought is England's—fly,
To Dacre bear my signet-ring:
Tell him his squadrons up to bring.—
Fitz-Eustace, to Lord Surrey hie;
Tunstall lies dead upon the field,
His life-blood stains the spotless shield:
Edmund is down:—my life is reft;
The Admiral alone is left.
Let Stanley charge with spur of fire,—
With Chester charge, and Lancashire,
Full upon Scotland's central host,
Or victory and England's lost.
Must I bid twice?—hence, varlets! fly!
Leave Marmion here alone—to die."

They parted, and alone he lay;
Clare drew her from the sight away,
Till pain rung forth a lowly moan,
And half he murmur'd—"Is there none,
Of all my halls have nursed,
Page, squire, or groom, one cup to bring
Of blessèd water from the spring,
To slake my dying thirst?"

(xxx.)

O woman! in our hours of ease,
Uncertain, coy, and hard to please,
And variable as the shade
By the light quivering aspen made;
When pain and anguish wring the brow,
A ministering angel thou!
Scarce were the piteous accents said,
When, with the Baron's casque, the maid
To the nigh streamlet ran:
Forgot were hatred, wrongs, and fears;
The plaintive voice alone she hears,
Sees but the dying man.
She stoop'd her by the runnel's side,
But in abhorrence backward drew;
For, oozing from the mountain's side,
Where raged the war, a dark-red tide
Was curdling in the streamlet blue.
Where shall she turn?—behold her mark
A little fountain cell,
Where water, clear as diamond-spark,
In a stone basin fell.
Above some half-worn letters say,

Drink . weary . pilgrim . drink . and . pray .
For . the . kind . soul . of . Sybil . Gray .
Who . built . this . cross . and . well .
She fill'd the helm, and back she hied,
And with surprise and joy espied
A Monk supporting Marmion's head;
A pious man, whom duty brought
To dubious verge of battle fought,
To shrive the dying, bless the dead.

(XXXI.)

Deep drank Lord Marmion of the wave,
And, as she stoop'd his brow to lave—
"Is it the hand of Clare," he said,
"Or injured Constance, bathes my head?"
Then, as remembrance rose,—
"Speak not to me of shrift or prayer!
I must redress her woes.
Short space, few words, are mine to spare;
Forgive and listen, gentle Clare!"
"Alas!" she said, "the while,—
Oh, think of your immortal weal!
In vain for Constance is your zeal;
She——died at Holy Isle."
Lord Marmion started from the ground,
As light as if he felt no wound;
Though in the action burst the tide,
In torrents, from his wounded side.
"Then it was truth,"—he said,—"I knew
That the dark presage must be true.—
I would the Fiend, to whom belongs
The vengeance due to all her wrongs,
Would spare me but a day!

For wasting fire, and dying groan,
And priests slain on the altar-stone,
  Might bribe him for delay.[24]
It may not be!—this dizzy trance—
Curse on yon base marauder's lance,
And doubly cursed my failing brand!
A sinful heart makes feeble hand."
Then, fainting, down on earth he sunk,
Supported by the trembling monk.

(XXXII.)

With fruitless labour, Clara bound,
And strove to staunch the gushing wound:
The monk with unavailing cares,
Exhausted all the Church's prayers.
Ever, he said, that, close and near,
A lady's voice was in his ear,
And that the priest he could not hear;
  For that she ever sung,
"In the lost battle, borne down by the flying,
Where mingles war's rattle with groans of the dying!"
  So the notes rung;—
"Avoid thee, Fiend!—with cruel hand,
Shake not the dying sinner's sand—
Oh, look, my son, upon yon sign
Of the Redeemer's grace divine;
  Oh, think on faith and bliss!—
By many a death-bed I have been,
And many a sinner's parting seen,
  But never aught like this."
The war, that for a space did fail,
Now trebly thundering swell'd the gale,
  And—"Stanley!" was the cry;—
A light on Marmion's visage spread,

And fired his glazing eye : [25]
With dying hand, above his head,
He shook the fragment of his blade,
And shouted "Victory !—
Charge, Chester, charge ! On, Stanley, on !'
Were the last words of Marmion.

(XXXIII.)

By this, though deep the evening fell,
Still rose the battle's deadly swell,
For still the Scots, around their king,
Unbroken, fought in desperate ring.
Where's now their victor vaward wing,
Where Huntly, and where Home ?—
Oh, for a blast of that dread horn,
On Fontarabian echoes borne,
That to King Charles did come,
When Rowland brave, and Olivier,
And every paladin and peer,
On Roncesvalles died !
Such blast might warn them, not in vain,
To quit the plunder of the slain,
And turn the doubtful day again,
While yet on Flodden side,
Afar, the Royal Standard flies,
And round it toils, and bleeds, and dies,
Our Caledonian pride !
In vain the wish—for far away,
While spoil and havoc mark their way,
Near Sybil's Cross the plunderers stray.—
"Oh, lady," cried the Monk, "away !"
And placed her on her steed,
And led her to the chapel fair,
Of Tillmouth upon Tweed.

There all the night they spent in prayer,
And at the dawn of morning, there
She met her kinsman, Lord Fitz-Clare.

(XXXIV.)

But as they left the dark'ning heath,[26]
More desperate grew the strife of death.
The English shafts in volleys hail'd,
In headlong charge their horse assail'd;
Front, flank, and rear, the squadrons sweep
To break the Scottish circle deep,
That fought around their king.
But yet, though thick the shafts as snow,
Though charging knights like whirlwinds go,
Though bill-men ply the ghastly blow,
Unbroken was the ring;
The stubborn spearmen still made good[27]
Their dark impenetrable wood,
Each stepping where his comrade stood,
The instant that he fell.
No thought was there of dastard flight;
Link'd in the serried phalanx tight,
Groom fought like noble, squire like knight,
As fearlessly and well;
Till utter darkness closed her wing
O'er their thin host and wounded King.
Then skilful Surrey's sage commands
Led back from strife his shatter'd bands;
And from the charge they drew,
As mountain-waves, from wasted lands,
Sweep back to ocean blue.
Then did their loss his foemen know;
Their King, their Lords, their mightiest low,

They melted from the field as snow,
When streams are swoll'n and south winds blow,
  Dissolves in silent dew.
Tweed's echoes heard the ceaseless plash,
  While many a broken band,
Disorder'd, through her currents dash,
  To gain the Scottish land;
To town and tower, to down and dale,
To tell red Flodden's dismal tale,
And raise the universal wail.
Tradition, legend, tune, and song,
Shall many an age that wail prolong:
Still from the sire the son shall hear
Of the stern strife, and carnage drear,
  Of Flodden's fatal field,
Where shiver'd was fair Scotland's spear,
  And broken was her shield!

THE LADY OF THE LAKE.

1810.

SIR WALTER SCOTT.

I.

THE TROSACHS.

FROM CANTO I.

(XI.)

THE western waves of ebbing day
Roll'd o'er the glen their level way;
Each purple peak, each flinty spire,
Was bathed in floods of living fire.
But not a setting beam could glow
Within the dark ravines below,
Where twined the path, in shadow hid,
Round many a rocky pyramid,
Shooting abruptly from the dell
Its thunder-splinter'd pinnacle;
Round many an insulated mass,
The native bulwarks of the pass,[28]
Huge as the towers which builders vain
Presumptuous piled on Shinar's plain.[29]
The rocky summits, split and rent,
Form'd turret, dome, or battlement,
Or seem'd fantastically set
With cupola or minaret,
Wild crests as pagod ever deck'd,
Or mosque of Eastern architect.

Nor were these earth-born castles bare,[30]
Nor lack'd they many a banner fair;
For, from their shiver'd brows display'd,
Far o'er the unfathomable glade,
All twinkling with the dew-drop's sheen,[31]
The briar-rose fell in streamers green,
And creeping shrubs, of thousand dyes,
Waved in the west-wind's summer sighs.

(XII.)

Boon nature scatter'd, free and wild,
Each plant or flower, the mountain's child.
Here eglantine embalm'd the air,
Hawthorn and hazel mingled there;
The primrose pale and violet flower,
Found in each cliff a narrow bower;
Foxglove and nightshade, side by side,
Emblems of punishment and pride,
Group'd their dark hues with every stain
The weather-beaten crags retain.
With boughs that quaked at every breath,
Grey birch and aspen wept beneath;
Aloft, the ash and warrior oak
Cast anchor in the rifted rock;
And, higher yet, the pine-tree hung
His shatter'd trunk, and frequent flung,
Where seem'd the cliffs to meet on high,
His boughs athwart the narrow'd sky.
Highest of all, where white peaks glanced,
Where glist'ning streamers waved and danced,
The wanderer's eye could barely view
The summer heaven's delicious blue;
So wondrous wild, the whole might seem
The scenery of a fairy dream.

(XIII.)

Onward, amid the copse 'gan peep
A narrow inlet, still and deep,
Affording scarce such breadth of brim,
As served the wild-duck's brood to swim.[32]
Lost for a space, through thickets veering,
But broader when again appearing,
Tall rocks and tufted knolls their face
Could on the dark-blue mirror trace;
And farther as the Hunter stray'd,
Still broader sweep its channels made.
The shaggy mounds no longer stood,
Emerging from entangled wood,
But, wave-encircled, seem'd to float,
Like castle girdled with its moat;
Yet broader floods extending still
Divide them from their parent hill,
Till each, retiring, claims to be
An islet in an inland sea.

(XIV.)

And now, to issue from the glen,
No pathway meets the wanderer's ken,
Unless he climb, with footing nice,
A far projecting precipice.[33]
The broom's tough roots his ladder made,
The hazel saplings lent their aid;
And thus an airy point he won,
Where, gleaming with the setting sun,
One burnish'd sheet of living gold,
Loch Katrine lay beneath him roll'd,
In all her length far winding lay,
With promontory, creek, and bay,

And islands that, empurpled bright,
Floated amid the livelier light,
And mountains, that like giants stand,
To sentinel enchanted land.
High on the south, huge Benvenue
Down on the lake in masses threw
Crags, knolls, and mounds, confusedly hurl'd,
The fragments of an earlier world;
A wildering forest feather'd o'er
His ruin'd sides and summit hoar,
While on the north through middle air,
Ben-an heaved high his forehead bare.

II.

FITZ-JAMES AND RODERICK DHU.

From Canto V.

(xii.)

The Chief in silence strode before,
And reach'd that torrent's sounding shore,
Which, daughter of three mighty lakes,
From Vennachar in silver breaks,
Sweeps through the plain, and ceaseless mines
On Bochastle the mouldering lines,
Where Rome, the Empress of the world,
Of yore her eagle wings unfurl'd.
And here his course the Chieftain staid,
Threw down his target and his plaid,
And to the Lowland warrior said :—
"Bold Saxon! to his promise just,
Vich-Alpine has discharged his trust.
This murderous Chief, this ruthless man,
This head of a rebellious clan,
Hath led thee safe, through watch and ward,
Far past Clan-Alpine's outmost guard.
Now, man to man, and steel to steel,
A Chieftain's vengeance thou shalt feel.
See, here, all vantageless I stand,
Arm'd like thyself, with single brand :
For this is Coilantogle ford,
And thou must keep thee with thy sword."—

(xiii.)

The Saxon paused :—"I ne'er delay'd,
When foeman bade me draw my blade;

Nay, more, brave Chief, I vow'd thy death:
Yet sure thy fair and generous faith,
And my deep debt for life preserved,
A better meed have well deserved:—
Can nought but blood our feud atone?
Are there no means?"—"No, Stranger, none!
And hear,—to fire thy flagging zeal,—
The Saxon cause rests on thy steel;
For thus spoke Fate, by prophet bred
Between the living and the dead,
'Who spills the foremost foeman's life,
His party conquers in the strife.'"—
"Then by my word," the Saxon said,
"The riddle is already read.
Seek yonder brake beneath the cliff,—
There lies Red Murdoch, stark and stiff.
Thus Fate has solved her prophecy,
Then yield to Fate, and not to me.
To James, at Stirling, let us go,
When, if thou wilt be still his foe,
Or if the King shall not agree
To grant thee grace and favour free,
I plight mine honour, oath, and word,
That, to thy native strengths restored,
With each advantage shalt thou stand,
That aids thee now to guard thy land."—

(XIV.)

Dark lightning flash'd from Roderick's eye—
"Soars thy presumption, then, so high,
Because a wretched kern ye slew,
Homage to name to Roderick Dhu?
He yields not, he, to man nor Fate!
Thou add'st but fuel to my hate:—

My clansman's blood demands revenge.—
Not yet prepared?—By Heaven, I change
My thought, and hold thy valour light
As that of some vain carpet-knight,
Who ill-deserved my courteous care,
And whose best boast is but to wear
A braid of his fair lady's hair."—
—"I thank thee, Roderick, for the word!
It nerves my heart, it steels my sword;
For I have sworn this braid to stain
In the best blood that warms thy vein.
Now, truce, farewell! and ruth, begone!—
Yet think not that by thee alone,
Proud Chief! can courtesy be shown;
Though not from copse, or heath, or cairn,
Start at my whistle, clansmen stern,
Of this small horn one feeble blast
Would fearful odds against thee cast.
But fear not—doubt not—which thou wilt—
We try this quarrel hilt to hilt."—
Then each at once his falchion drew,
Each on the ground his scabbard threw,
Each look'd to sun, and stream, and plain,
As what they ne'er might see again;
Then foot, and point, and eye opposed,
In dubious strife they darkly closed.

(xv.)

Ill fared it then with Roderick Dhu,
That on the field his targe he threw,
Whose brazen studs and tough bull-hide
Had death so often dash'd aside;
For, train'd abroad his arms to wield,
Fitz-James's blade was sword and shield.

He practised every pass and ward,
To thrust, to strike, to feint, to guard;
While less expert, though stronger far,
The Gael maintain'd unequal war.
Three times in closing strife they stood,
And thrice the Saxon blade drank blood;
No stinted draught, no scanty tide,
The gushing flood the tartans dyed.
Fierce Roderick felt the fatal drain,
And showered his blows like wintry rain;
And, as firm rock, or castle-roof,
Against the winter shower is proof,
The foe, invulnerable still,
Foil'd his wild rage by steady skill;
Till, at advantage ta'en, his brand
Forced Roderick's weapon from his hand,
And, backward borne upon the lea,
Brought the proud Chieftain to his knee.

(XVI.)

"Now, yield thee, or, by Him who made
The world, thy heart's blood dyes my blade!"—
"Thy threats, thy mercy, I defy!
Let recreant yield, who fears to die."—
Like adder darting from his coil,
Like wolf that dashes through the toil,
Like mountain-cat who guards her young,
Full at Fitz-James's throat he sprung;
Received, but reck'd not of a wound,
And locked his arms his foeman round.—
Now, gallant Saxon, hold thine own!
No maiden's hand is round thee thrown!
That desperate grasp thy frame might feel,
Through bars of brass and triple steel!—

They tug, they strain !—down, down they go,
The Gael above, Fitz-James below.
The Chieftain's gripe his throat compress'd,
His knee was planted in his breast;
His clotted locks he backward threw,
Across his brow his hand he drew,
From blood and mist to clear his sight,
Then gleam'd aloft his dagger bright !—
—But hate and fury ill supplied
The stream of life's exhausted tide,
And all too late the advantage came,
To turn the odds of deadly game;
For, while the dagger gleam'd on high,
Reel'd, soul and sense, reel'd, brain and eye.
Down came the blow! but in the heath
The erring blade found bloodless sheath.
The struggling foe may now unclasp
The fainting Chief's relaxing grasp;
Unwounded from the dreadful close,
But breathless all, Fitz-James arose.

III.

BATTLE OF BEAL' AN DUINE.

From Canto VI.

(xv.)

The Minstrel Allan Bane gives Roderick Dhu, chief of Clan Alpine, who is dying, an account of the Battle between the royal forces and those of his clan.

"The Minstrel came once more to view
The eastern ridge of Benvenue,
For, ere he parted, he would say
Farewell to lovely Loch Achray—
Where shall he find, in foreign land,
So lone a lake, so sweet a strand!
There is no breeze upon the fern,
Nor ripple on the lake,
Upon her eyrie nods the erne,
The deer has sought the brake;
The small birds will not sing aloud,
The springing trout lies still,
So darkly glooms yon thunder cloud,
That swathes, as with a purple shroud,
Benledi's distant hill.
Is it the thunder's solemn sound
That mutters deep and dread,
Or echoes from the groaning ground
The warrior's measured tread?
Is it the lightning's quivering glance
That on the thicket streams,
Or do they flash on spear and lance
The sun's retiring beams?

I see the dagger-crest of Mar,
I see the Moray's silver star,
Wave o'er the cloud of Saxon war,
That up the lake comes winding far!
To hero bound for battle-strife,
Or bard of martial lay,
'Twere worth ten years of peaceful life,
One glance at their array!

(XVI.)

"Their light-arm'd archers far and near
Survey'd the tangled ground,
Their centre ranks, with pike and spear,
A twilight forest frown'd,
Their barbèd horsemen, in the rear,
The stern battalia crown'd.
No cymbal clash'd, no clarion rang,
Still were the pipe and drum;
Save heavy tread, and armour's clang,
The sullen march was dumb.
There breathed no wind their crests to shake,
Or wave their flags abroad;
Scarce the frail aspen seem'd to quake,
That shadow'd o'er their road.
Their vaward scouts no tidings bring,
Can rouse no lurking foe,
Nor spy a trace of living thing,
Save when they stirred the roe;
The host moves, like a deep-sea wave,
Where rise no rocks its pride to brave,
High-swelling, dark, and slow.
The lake is pass'd, and now they gain
A narrow and a broken plain,

Before the Trosachs' rugged jaws;
And here the horse and spearmen pause,
While, to explore the dangerous glen,
Dive through the pass the archer-men.

(XVII.)

"At once there rose so wild a yell
Within that dark and narrow dell,
As all the fiends, from heaven that fell,
Had peal'd the banner-cry of hell!
Forth from the pass in tumult driven,
Like chaff before the wind of heaven,
The archery appear:
For life! for life! their flight they ply—
And shriek, and shout, and battle-cry,
And plaids and bonnets waving high,
And broad-swords flashing to the sky,
Are maddening in the rear.
Onward they drive, in dreadful race,
Pursuers and pursued;
Before that tide of flight and chase,
How shall it keep its rooted place,
The spearmen's twilight wood?—
'Down, down,' cried Mar, 'your lances down!
Bear back both friend and foe!'
Like reeds before the tempest's frown,
That serried grove of lances brown
At once lay levell'd low;
And closely shouldering, side to side,
The bristling ranks the onset bide.—
'We'll quell the savage mountaineer,
As their Tinchel cows the game!
They come as fleet as forest deer,
We'll drive them back as tame.'—

(XVIII.)

"Bearing before them, in their course,
The relics of the archer force,
Like wave with crest of sparkling foam,
Right onward did Clan-Alpine come.
Above the tide, each broadsword bright
Was brandishing like beam of light,
Each targe was dark below;
And with the ocean's mighty swing,
When heaving to the tempest's wing,
They hurl'd them on the foe.
I heard the lance's shivering crash,
As when the whirlwind rends the ash,
I heard the broadsword's deadly clang,
As if an hundred anvils rang!
But Moray wheel'd his rearward rank
Of horsemen on Clan-Alpine's flank,
—'My banner-man, advance!
I see,' he cried, 'their column shake.—
Now, gallants! for your ladies' sake,
Upon them with the lance!'—
The horsemen dash'd among the rout,
As deer break through the broom;
Their steeds are stout, their swords are out,
They soon made lightsome room.
Clan-Alpine's best are backward borne—
Where, where, was Roderick then!
One blast upon his bugle-horn
Were worth a thousand men!
And refluent through the pass of fear
The battle's tide was pour'd;
Vanish'd the Saxon's struggling spear,
Vanish'd the mountain sword.

As Bracklinn's chasm, so black and steep,
Receives her roaring linn,
As the dark caverns of the deep
Suck the wild whirlpool in,
So did the deep and darksome pass
Devour the battle's mingled mass:
None linger now upon the plain,
Save those who ne'er shall fight again.

(XIX.)

"Now westward rolls the battle's din,
That deep and doubling pass within.
—Minstrel, away! the work of fate[34]
Is bearing on: its issue wait,
Where the rude Trosach's dread defile
Opens on Katrine's lake and isle.—
Grey Benvenue I soon repass'd
Loch-Katrine lay beneath me cast.
The sun is set;—the clouds are met,
The lowering scowl of heaven
An inky hue of livid blue
To the deep lake has given;
Strange gusts of wind from mountain-glen
Swept o'er the lake, then sunk agen.
I heeded not the eddying surge,
Mine eye but saw the Trosach's gorge,
Mine ear but heard the sullen sound,
Which, like an earthquake, shook the ground,
And spoke the stern and desperate strife
That parts not but with parting life,
Seeming, to minstrel-ear, to toll[35]
The dirge of many a passing soul.
Nearer it comes—the dim-wood glen
The martial flood disgorged agen,

But not in mingled tide;
The plaided warriors of the North
High on the mountain thunder forth
And overhang its side;
While by the lake below appears
The dark'ning cloud of Saxon spears.[36]
At weary bay each shatter'd band,
Eyeing their foemen, sternly stand;
Their banners stream like tatter'd sail,
That flings its fragments to the gale,
And broken arms and disarray
Mark'd the fell havoc of the day.

(xx.)

"Viewing the mountain's ridge askance,
The Saxons stood in sullen trance,
Till Moray pointed with his lance,
And cried,—'Behold yon isle!—
See! none are left to guard its strand,
But women weak, that wring the hand:
'Tis there of yore the robber band
Their booty wont to pile;—
My purse, with bonnet-pieces store,
To him will swim a bow-shot o'er,
And loose a shallop from the shore.
Lightly we'll tame the war-wolf then,
Lords of his mate and brood and den.'
Forth from the ranks a spearman sprung,
On earth his casque and corslet rung,
He plunged him in the wave:—
All saw the deed—the purpose knew,
And to their clamours Benvenue
A mingled echo gave;
The Saxons shout, their mate to cheer,

The helpless females scream for fear,
And yells for rage the mountaineer.
'Twas then, as by the outcry riven,
Pour'd down at once the lowering heaven;
A whirlwind swept Loch-Katrine's breast,
Her billows rear'd their snowy crest.
Well for the swimmer swell'd they high,
To mar the Highland marksman's eye;
For round him showered, 'mid rain and hail,
The vengeful arrows of the Gael.—
In vain.—He nears the isle—and lo!
His hand is on a shallop's bow.
Just then a flash of lightning came,
It tinged the waves and strand with flame;—
I marked Duncraggan's widow'd dame,
Behind an oak I saw her stand,
A naked dirk gleam'd in her hand:
It darken'd,—but amid the moan
Of waves I heard a dying groan;—
Another flash!—the spearman floats
A weltering corse beside the boats,
And the stern matron o'er him stood,
Her hand and dagger streaming blood.

(XXI.)

"'Revenge! revenge!' the Saxons cried,
The Gaels' exulting shout replied.
Despite the elemental rage,
Again they hurried to engage;
But, ere they closed in desperate fight,
Bloody with spurring came a knight,
Sprung from his horse, and, from a crag,
Waved 'twixt the hosts a milk-white flag.

Clarion and trumpet by his side
Rung forth a truce-note high and wide,
While, in the Monarch's name, afar
An herald's voice forbade the war,
For Bothwell's lord and Roderick bold,
Were both, he said, in captive hold."
—But here the lay made sudden stand!—
The harp escaped the Minstrel's hand!
Oft had he stolen a glance, to spy
How Roderick brook'd his minstrelsy:
At first, the Chieftain, to the chime,
With lifted hand, kept feeble time;
That motion ceased,—yet feeling strong
Varied his look as changed the song;
At length, no more his deafen'd ear
The minstrel melody can hear;
His face grows sharp,—his hands are clench'd,
As if some pang his heart-strings wrench'd;
Set are his teeth, his fading eye [37]
Is sternly fix'd on vacancy;
Thus, motionless, and moanless, drew
His parting breath, stout Roderick Dhu!—

ROKEBY.

1812.

WALTER SCOTT.

O, BRIGNALL BANKS ARE WILD AND FAIR.

FROM CANTO III.

(XVI.)

O BRIGNALL banks are wild and fair,
And Greta woods are green,
And you may gather garlands there,
Would grace a summer queen.
And as I rode by Dalton-hall,
Beneath the turrets high,
A Maiden on the castle wall
Was singing merrily,—

CHORUS.

"O, Brignall banks are fresh and fair,
And Greta woods are green;
I'd rather rove with Edmund there,
Than reign our English queen."—

"If, Maiden, thou would'st wend with me,
To leave both tower and town,
Thou first must guess what life lead we,
That dwell by dale and down?
And if thou canst that riddle read,
As read full well you may,
Then to the green-wood shalt thou speed,
As blithe as Queen of May."—

CHORUS.

Yet sung she, "Brignall banks are fair
And Greta woods are green;
I'd rather rove with Edmund there,
Than reign our English queen.

(XVII.)

I read you, by your bugle-horn,
And by your palfrey good,
I read you for a Ranger sworn,
To keep the king's green-wood."—
"A Ranger, lady, winds his horn,
And 'tis at peep of light;
His blast is heard at merry morn,
And mine at dead of night."—

CHORUS.

Yet sung she, "Brignall banks are fair,
And Greta woods are gay;
I would I were with Edmund there,
To reign his Queen of May!

With burnished brand and musketoon,
So gallantly you come,
I read you for a bold Dragoon,
That lists the tuck of drum."—
"I list no more the tuck of drum,
No more the trumpet hear;
But when the beetle sounds his hum,
My comrades take the spear."—

CHORUS.

"And, O! though Brignall banks be fair,
And Greta woods be gay,
Yet mickle must the maiden dare,
Would reign my Queen of May!

(XVIII.)

Maiden! a nameless life I lead,
A nameless death I'll die;
The fiend, whose lantern lights the mead,[38]
Were better mate than I!
And when I'm with my comrades met,[39]
Beneath the green-wood bough,
What once we were we all forget,
Nor think what we are now.

CHORUS.

Yet Brignall banks are fresh and fair,
And Greta woods are green,
And you may gather garlands there
Would grace a summer queen."

THE LORD OF THE ISLES.

1814.

SIR WALTER SCOTT.

LAKE CORISKIN.

FROM CANTO III.

(XIII.)

A WHILE their route they silent made,
As men who stalk for mountain-deer,
Till the good Bruce to Ronald said,
"St Mary! what a scene is here!
I've traversed many a mountain-strand,
Abroad, and in my native land,
And it has been my lot to tread
Where safety more than pleasure led;
Thus, many a waste I've wander'd o'er,
Clombe many a crag, cross'd many a moor,
But, by my halidome,
A scene so rude, so wild as this,
Yet so sublime in barrenness,
Ne'er did my wandering footsteps press
Where'er I happ'd to roam."

(XIV.)

No marvel thus the Monarch spake;
For rarely human eye has known
A scene so stern as that dread lake,
With its dark ledge of barren stone.

Seems that primeval earthquake's sway
Hath rent a strange and shatter'd way
Through the rude bosom of the hill,
And that each naked precipice,
Sable ravine, and dark abyss,
Tells of the outrage still.
The wildest glen, but this, can show
Some touch of Nature's genial glow;
On high Benmore green mosses grow,
And heath-bells bud in deep Glencoe,
And copse on Cruchan-Ben;
But here,—above, around, below,
On mountain or in glen,
Nor tree, nor shrub, nor plant, nor flower,
Nor aught of vegetative power,
The weary eye may ken.
For all is rocks at random thrown,
Black waves, bare crags, and banks of stone,
As if were here denied
The summer sun, the spring's sweet dew,
That clothe with many a varied hue
The bleakest mountain-side.

(XV.)

And wilder, forward as they wound,
Were the proud cliffs and lake profound.
Huge terraces of granite black [40]
Afforded rude and cumber'd track;
For from the mountain hoar,
Hurl'd headlong in some night of fear,
When yell'd the wolf and fled the deer,
Loose crags had toppled o'er;
And some, chance-poised and balanced, lay,
So that a stripling arm might sway

A mass no host could raise,
In Nature's rage at random thrown,
Yet trembling like the Druid's stone
On its precarious base.
The evening mists, with ceaseless change,
Now clothed the mountains' lofty range,
Now left their foreheads bare,
And round the skirts their mantle furl'd,
Or on the sable waters curl'd,
Or on the eddying breezes whirl'd,
Dispersed in middle air.
And oft, condensed, at once they lower,
When, brief and fierce, the mountain shower
Pours like a torrent down,
And when return the sun's glad beams,
Whiten'd with foam a thousand streams
Leap from the mountain's crown.

(XVI.)

"This lake," said Bruce, "whose barriers drear
Are precipices sharp and sheer,
Yielding no track for goat or deer,
Save the black shelves we tread,
How term you its dark waves? and how
Yon northern mountain's pathless brow,
And yonder peak of dread,
That to the evening sun uplifts
The grisly gulfs and slaty rifts,
Which seam its shiver'd head?"—
"Coriskin call the dark lake's name,
Coolin the ridge, as bards proclaim,
From old Cuchullin, chief of fame.
But bards, familiar in our isles
Rather with Nature's frowns than smiles,

Full oft their careless humours please
By sportive names from scenes like these.
I would old Torquil were to show
His maidens with their breasts of snow,
Or that my noble Liege were nigh
To hear his Nurse sing lullaby!
(The Maids—tall cliffs with breakers white,
The Nurse—a torrent's roaring might,)
Or that your eye could see the mood
Of Corryvrekin's whirlpool rude,
When dons the Hag her whiten'd hood—
'Tis thus our islemen's fancy frames,
For scenes so stern, fantastic names."

SONGS.

WALTER SCOTT.

I.—HUNTING SONG.

1808.

WAKEN, lords and ladies gay!
On the mountain dawns the day,
All the jolly chase is here,
With hawk, and horse, and hunting-spear!
Hounds are in their couples yelling,
Hawks are whistling, horns are knelling,
Merrily, merrily, mingle they,
"Waken, lords and ladies gay."

Waken, lords and ladies gay!
The mist has left the mountain gray,
Springlets in the dawn are steaming,
Diamonds on the brake are gleaming;
And foresters have busy been
To track the buck in thicket green;
Now we come to chant our lay,
"Waken, lords and ladies gay!"

Waken, lords and ladies gay!
To the green-wood haste away;
We can show you where he lies,
Fleet of foot, and tall of size;
We can show the marks he made,
When 'gainst the oak his antlers fray'd;
You shall see him brought to bay,—
"Waken, lords and ladies gay."

Louder, louder chant the lay,
Waken, lords and ladies gay!
Tell them youth, and mirth, and glee,
Run a course as well as we;
Time, stern huntsman! who can baulk,
Stanch as hound, and fleet as hawk!
Think of this, and rise with day,
Gentle lords and ladies gay.

II.—LULLABY OF AN INFANT CHIEF.

1815.

O HUSH thee, my babie, thy sire was a knight,
Thy mother a lady, both lovely and bright;
The woods and the glens, from the towers which we see,
They all are belonging, dear babie, to thee.[41]

O, fear not the bugle, though loudly it blows,
It calls but the warders that guard thy repose;
Their bows would be bended, their blades would be red,
Ere the step of a foeman draws near to thy bed.

O, hush thee, my babie, the time soon will come,
When thy sleep shall be broken by trumpet and drum;
Then hush thee, my darling, take rest while you may,
For strife comes with manhood, and waking with day.

III.—JOCK O' HAZELDEAN.

1816.

"WHY weep ye by the tide, ladie?
Why weep ye by the tide?
I'll wed ye to my youngest son,
And ye sall be his bride:

And ye sall be his bride, ladie,
Sae comely to be seen"—
But aye she loot the tears down fa'
For Jock o' Hazeldean.[42]

Now let this wilfu' grief be done,
And dry that cheek so pale;
Young Frank is chief of Errington,
And lord of Langley-dale;
His step is first in peaceful ha',
His sword in battle keen"—
But aye she loot the tears down fa'
For Jock o' Hazeldean.

A chain of gold ye sall not lack,
Nor braid to bind your hair;
Nor mettled hound, nor managed hawk,
Nor palfrey fresh and fair;
And you, the foremost o' them a',
Shall ride our forest queen"—
But aye she loot the tears down fa'
For Jock o' Hazeldean.

The kirk was deck'd at morning-tide,
The tapers glimmer'd fair;
The priest and bridegroom wait the bride,
And dame and knight are there.
They sought her baith by bower and ha';
The ladie was not seen!
She's o'er the Border, and awa'
Wi' Jock o' Hazeldean.

IV.—MADGE WILDFIRE'S DEATH SONG.

From "The Heart of Midlothian," Chap. XL.[43]

1819.

I.

"OUR work is over—over now,
The good man wipes his weary brow,
The last long wain wends slow away,
And we are free to sport and play.

The night comes on when sets the sun,
The labour ends when day is done,
When Autumn's gone and Winter's come,
We hold our jovial harvest-home."

II.

"When the fight of grace is fought,—
When the marriage vest is wrought,—
When Faith hath chased cold Doubt away,
And Hope but sickens at delay,—

When Charity, imprison'd here,
Longs for a more expanded sphere,
Doff thy robes of sin and clay;
Christian, rise, and come away."

III.

"CAULD is my bed, Lord Archibald,
And sad my sleep of sorrow;
But thine sall be as sad and cauld,
My fause true-love! to-morrow.

And weep ye not, my maidens free,
Though death your mistress borrow;
For he for whom I die to-day,
Shall die for me to-morrow."

IV.

"PROUD Maisie is in the wood,
Walking so early;
Sweet Robin sits on the bush,
Singing so rarely.

'Tell me, thou bonny bird,
When shall I marry me?'—
'When six braw gentlemen
Kirkward shall carry ye.'

* * *

'Who makes the bridal bed,
Birdie, say truly?'—
'The grey-headed sexton,
That delves the grave duly.'

* * *

The glow-worm o'er grave and stone
Shall light thee steady;
The owl from the steeple sing
'Welcome, proud lady.'"

V.—COUNTY GUY.

1823.

FROM "QUENTIN DURWARD," CHAP. IV.

AH! County Guy, the hour is nigh,
The sun has left the lea,
The orange-flower perfumes the bower,
The breeze is on the sea.
The lark, his lay who thrill'd all day,
Sits hush'd his partner nigh;
Breeze, bird, and flower, confess the hour,
But where is County Guy?

The village maid steals through the shade,
Her shepherd's suit to hear;
To beauty shy, by lattice high,
Sings high-born Cavalier.
The star of Love, all stars above,
Now reigns o'er earth and sky;
And high and low the influence know—
But where is County Guy!

VI.—BONNY DUNDEE.

1830.

FROM "THE DOOM OF DEVORGOIL."

TO the Lords of Convention 'twas Claver'se who spoke
"Ere the King's crown shall fall there are crowns to be
So let each Cavalier who loves honour and me,
Come follow the bonnet of Bonny Dundee.

Come fill up my cup, come fill up my can,
Come saddle your horses, and call up your men;
Come open the West Port, and let me gang free,
And it's room for the bonnets of Bonny Dundee!"

Dundee he is mounted, he rides up the street,
The bells are rung backward, the drums they are beat;
But the Provost, douce man, said, "Just e'en let him be,
The Gude Town is weel quit of that Deil of Dundee."

As he rode down the sanctified bends of the Bow,
Ilk carline was flyting and shaking her pow;
But the young plants of grace they look'd couthie and slee,
Thinking, luck to thy bonnet, thou Bonny Dundee!

With sour-featured Whigs the Grassmarket was cramm'd
As if half the West had set tryst to be hang'd;
There was spite in each look, there was fear in each e'e,
As they watch'd for the bonnets of Bonny Dundee.

These cowls of Kilmarnock had spits and had spears
And lang-hafted gullies to kill Cavaliers;
But they shrunk to close-heads, and the causeway was free,
At the toss of the bonnet of Bonny Dundee.

He spurr'd to the foot of the proud Castle rock,
And with the gay Gordon he gallantly spoke;
"Let Mons Meg and her marrows speak twa words or three,
For the love of the bonnet of Bonny Dundee."

The Gordon demands of him which way he goes—
"Where'er shall direct me the shade of Montrose!
Your Grace in short space shall hear tidings of me,
Or that low lies the bonnet of Bonny Dundee.

There are hills beyond Pentland, and lands beyond Forth,
If there's lords in the Lowlands, there's chiefs in the North;
There are wild Duniewassals three thousand times three,
Will cry *hoigh!* for the bonnet of Bonny Dundee.

There's brass on the target of barken'd bull-hide;
There's steel in the scabbard that dangles beside;
The brass shall be burnish'd, the steel shall flash free,
At a toss of the bonnet of Bonny Dundee.

Away to the hills, to the caves, to the rocks—
Ere I own an usurper, I'll couch with the fox;
And tremble, false Whigs, in the midst of your glee,
You have not seen the last of my bonnet and me!"

He waved his proud hand, and the trumpets were blown,
The kettle-drums clash'd, and the horsemen rode on,
Till on Ravelston's cliffs and on the Clermiston's lee
Died away the wild war-notes of Bonny Dundee.

Come fill up my cup, come fill up my can,
Come saddle the horses and call up the men,
Come open your gates, and let me gae free,
For it's up with the bonnets of Bonny Dundee!

NOTES

TO POEMS BY SIR WALTER SCOTT.

1. Anne, Duchess of Buccleuch and Monmouth, representative of the ancient Lords of Buccleuch, and widow of the unfortunate James, Duke of Monmouth, who was beheaded in 1685.

2. Francis Scott, Earl of Buccleuch, father of the Duchess.

3. Walter, Earl of Buccleuch, grandfather of the Duchess, and a celebrated warrior.

4. *Scaur*, a precipitous bank of earth.

5. *Hairibee*, the place of executing the Border marauders at Carlisle. The *neck-verse* is the beginning of Psalm li., *Miserere mei*, etc., anciently read by criminals, claiming the benefit of clergy.

6. *Barbican*, the defence of the outer gate of a feudal castle.

7. *Peel*, a Border tower.

8. An ancient Roman road, crossing through part of Roxburghshire.

9. *Barded*, or barbed, applied to a horse accoutred with defensive armour.

10. *Lauds*, the midnight service of the Catholic Church.

11. But, oh! far different change has been
Since Marmion, from the crown
Of Blackford-hill, upon the scene
Of Scotland's war look'd down.—MS.

12. The Borough, or Common Moor of Edinburgh, was of very great extent, reaching from the south walls of the city to the bottom of Braid Hills. When James IV. mustered the army of the kingdom there in 1513, the Borough Moor

was, according to Hawthornden, a field spacious and delightful by the shade of many stately and aged oaks.

13. Seven Culverins, so called, cast by one Borthwick.

14. Ere first they met Lord Marmion's eye,
Fitz-Eustace shouted loud and high.—MS.

15. They file from out the hawthorn shade,
And all go sweeping by.—MS.

16. Nor mark'd the lady's deep despair,
Nor heeded discontented look.—MS.

17. Brian Tunstall was one of the few Englishmen of rank slain at Flodden, and was called in the romantic language of the time, "Tunstall the Undefiled."

18. Beneath thy seneschal, Fitz-Hugh.—MS.

19. Fell stainless Tunstall's banner white,
Sir Edmund's lion fell.—MS.

20. Like pine up-rooted from the ground.—M.S.

21. And cried he would return in haste.—MS.

22. And when he felt the fresher air.—MS.

23. She stoop'd her by the runnel's tide,
But in abhorrence soon withdrew;
For, oozing from the mountains wide
Where raged the war, a dark-red tide
Was curdling in the streamlet blue.
Where shall she turn?—behold she marks,
A little vaulted cell,
Whose water, clear as diamond sparks,
In a rude basin fell.
Above, some half-worn letters say,
Drink, passing pilgrim, drink, and pray.—MS.

24. Fire, sacrilege, and dying groan,
And priests gorged on the altar-stone,
Might bribe him for delay.
And all by whom the deed was done,
Should, with myself, become his own.—MS.

25. And sparkled in his eye.—MS.

26. But still upon the Dark'ning heath.—MS.

27. Ever the stubborn spears made good
Their dark impenetrable wood;
Each Scot step'd where his comrade stood,

The instant that he fell,
Till the last ray of parting light,
Then ceased perforce the dreadful fight,
And sunk the battle's yell.
The skilful Surrey's sage commands
Drew from the strife his shatter'd bands.
Their loss his foemen knew;
Their King, their Lords, their mightiest low,
They melted from the field as snow,
When streams are swoln and south winds blow,
Melts from the mountain blue.
By various march their scatter'd bands,
Disorder'd, gain'd the Scottish lands.—
Day dawns on Flodden's dreary side,
And show'd the scene of carnage wide;
There, Scotland, lay thy bravest pride!—MS.

28. Round many an insulated mass,
The mimic castles of the pass,—MS.

29. The Tower of Babel.

30. Nor were these mighty bulwarks bare,
Nor lack'd they many a banner fair.—MS.

31. Bright glistening with the dew-drop's sheen,
The briar-rose fell in streamers green,—MS.

32. Affording scarce such breadth of flood,
As served to float the wild duck's brood.—MS.

33. Until the present road was made through the pass, there was no mode of issuing out of the defile called the Trosachs, excepting by a sort of ladder composed of the branches and roots of trees.

34. Away! away! the work of fate
Is bearing on: its issues wait.—MS.

35. And seem'd, to minstrel ear, to toll
The parting dirge of many a soul.—MS.

36. While by the darken'd lake below,
File out the spearmen of the foe.—MS.

37. Set are his teeth, his glazing eye
Is sternly fixed on vacancy;—MS.

38. The Goblin-light on fen and mead,
Were better mate than I!—MS.

39. And were I with my true-love set
Under the greenwood bough,
What once I was she must forget,
Nor think what I am now.—MS.

40. And wilder, at each step they take,
Turn the proud cliffs and yawning lake;
Huge naked sheets of granite black,
Afforded rude and cumber'd track;—MS.

41. Written to the air "Cadul gu lo" (Sleep on till day), with the following refrain:—

O ho ro, i ri ri, cadul gu lo,
O ho ro, i ri ri, cadul gu lo.

42. The first stanza of this ballad is ancient. The others were written for Campbell's "Albyn's Anthology."

43. These stanzas are the fragments of verse sung by Madge Wildfire, at intervals, on her death-bed.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge.

1772—1834.

THE early days of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, and the writers whose names are linked with his, form a peculiarly pleasant chapter in our literary annals. A bright charm attaches to it; an exhilarating springtide freshness breathes over the page. Its incidents have all the attractiveness of ingenuous youth. There is such a heart-beat in the story, such an air of buoyant, high-flown expectancy, that, as we read and read again, we are ready to exclaim with one of the brotherhood, though without his local reference,

> "Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive,
> But to be young was very heaven!"

The whole atmosphere was then palpitating with the spirit of change, of renewal, of unfolding growth. All things, the wide earth, as Wordsworth afterwards said, wore the budding beauty of promise. And round those years, to our eyes, has gathered a spell which nothing, surely, can dissipate.

The charm of those young figures is the charm of the scenes in which they moved. The breezes and the springy turf of the Quantocks, the garden-close at Clevedon, with its simple flowers, the confused yet blithe murmur of west-country streams, and the

solemnity of mountain silences do but reflect the spirit which alternately pervaded that fraternity. Plain living and high thinking, it was, for the most part; but frugal means are a set-off to such genius. We love the two households at Nether Stowey and Alfoxden all the more that ways were simple and economy sometimes pinching; and as a background to their several hopes and aspirings we prefer the benign face of good Mr. Cottle, the Bristol publisher, to any number of pompous and wealthy patrons. Our knowledge of the clouds that came up later, following and overshadowing one, the most imaginative of that memorable group, does not detract from the brightness of the picture.

The quiet little Devonshire town of Ottery St. Mary had the honour of producing Samuel Taylor Coleridge. Probably the event, which took place on the 21st of October, 1772, occasioned but languid interest among the village folk, since the new-comer was the tenth infant that had invaded the dwelling of their good vicar. Although death reduced the number of mouths to feed, the father of this large family probably found it very helpful that his leisure enabled him to combine his function of preacher and pastor with that of pedagogue. He seems to have been greatly revered by his parishioners, who loved his genial, unselfish ways as much as they respected his Hebrew quotations in the pulpit. He was an eccentric, unsophisticated old man, and neither from him nor from his other parent, a homely, housewifely woman, with an utter absence of intellectual gifts or desires, did the poet apparently derive his nature or genius. Indeed, Samuel seems never to have been "one of the family," though he had a deep and lasting

admiration for his father's high moral character. Morbid sensitiveness made him hold aloof to a great extent from companionship, and he himself afterwards admitted that a child's habits and ways of speech and thought had never been his. Yet he must have given to Nature the love that failed to find expression in the home; for, when a bluecoat boy in London, he used, in holiday hours, to lie on the leaded roof of Christ's Hospital, comforting himself with day-dreams of his native place. His schoolfellow, Charles Lamb, during his after days of barren desk-work in the India House, never panted more for the green fields of his beloved Hertfordshire than did young Coleridge for the pleasant valley of the Otter, on whose banks he had roved as a little moody child. The beauty of the district seemed photographed upon his imagination, and one seems to detect in his poems not a few similes and allusions suggested by his Devonshire home. The sails of the haunted ship in "The Ancient Mariner" sigh like the sedges behind which, in some elbow of the stream, he may lazily have lain, when he took it into his head to play truant. Anon the sound of the rustling canvas reminds him of the hidden brook whose music had often caught his ear in the still summer night, as he passed belated through Harpford Woods.

Coleridge was only nine years old when he lost his father, and it was then that his transference to public school-life in London took place. He does not seem to have been very happy there; many of the regulations must have seemed harsh and severe, and he had scarcely anybody in the great city to look to as a friend. But pleasures and diversions of

a sort he contrived to have, notably holiday visits to the New River, where he could indulge his prowess as a swimmer. Later on, he and another head-boy contracted a juvenile passion for the sisters of a schoolfellow named Evans, which, though ephemeral enough, served to lend a roseate hue to the last few years of his teens. Coleridge appears to have studied with a fair amount of diligence, and out of school hours his appetite for all kinds of reading was insatiable.

Having been birched out of an incipient attack of atheism, and laughed out of affectation and artificialism in poetry, by the same excellent individual, Coleridge left school; and after a flying visit to Ottery, proceeded to Cambridge, where admission was procured for him at Jesus College. Like that of so many poets of his time, his college course was not one of startling achievements. But his powers as a talker, and his growing passion for politics and poetry and the discussion of such, rendered his rooms a popular meeting-place for kindred spirits, of whom there were many. Like Wordsworth his contemporary, Coleridge threw his sympathies ardently into the great struggle of democracy inaugurated across the Channel,

> "When France in wrath her giant limbs upreared,
> And with that oath which smote air, earth, and sea,
> Stamped her strong foot and said she would be free!"

To young and generous minds in this island there was something in that great eruption which thrilled the fancy with boundless hope. To them it was the convulsive throes which precede the re-making and renewal of a world. To them the lurid glare

in the southern sky was but the light of cleansing fires, and the pitiless rage of a maddened populace was the tempest that will shatter and purify, and pass. They had faith in the new spirit of fraternity, and in its power to work out its own salvation, and they trusted that love would prompt the laying aside of violence as soon as its purpose was accomplished. But when the storm-wind continued to rave, and the fires began to burn eastward against the very citadels of Freedom—the pine-clad hills of the little Swiss republic, then indeed that faith began to falter, and the bright vision of universal brotherhood melted like a morning cloud. Still later, when France, with a despot as her leader, threatened our own land with invasion, we can scarcely wonder at the changed attitude of the two ardent minds who had once sympathised with her so unreservedly.

While still at college, Coleridge, in some occult manner, managed to contract debts, which frightened him into resuming an old expedient—he ran away and was temporarily lost to his friends. In London, being destitute of resources, he enlisted in the 15th Light Dragoons, under the name of Silas Titus Comberbach. His comrades laughed at his clumsy manners as a trooper, but highly appreciated his talents as a *raconteur;* and were genuinely sorry when a piece of Latin scribbling in the stables led to the betrayal of his identity, and his restoration to his friends.

The last year spent by Coleridge at Cambridge was signalised by an introduction to Southey, who had come up from Bristol to Oxford. The same feeling of kinship which, later on, led him to search out

Wordsworth at Racedown, attracted Coleridge to the future author of "Thalaba," and the two men, similar in many of their tastes and views and aspirations, were soon close friends. After the vacation the two young enthusiasts met again at Bristol.

We now reach the time of the poet's introduction to Sara Fricker and the inception of Pantisocracy. There were four sisters in Bristol, fatherless and unendowed, but by no means devoid of personal charms. To one of these ladies Southey was engaged; while Robert Lovell, a Quaker poet, was already mated with a second. Coleridge became affianced to the eldest, Sara, aged twenty-three. These men, with sundry other personages, being fully agreed as to the unsatisfactory state of English laws and modern society, it was proposed to solve the problem of a practicable remedy, not by following the French example and starting a revolution, but by the simpler and safer expedient of removing off the scene themselves. Away in "the rich heart of the West," far from pomps and tyrannies, on the beautiful banks of the Susquehanna, they and their wives would make themselves a new home, and become the founders of an ideal state. Information from certain travellers and strangers who "knew America" was swallowed with a credulous avidity that does not say much for the sagacity of the Pantisocrats; and subscribers to the scheme were energetically canvassed. But the whole project came to nought, chiefly through lack of the needful funds. Southey accepted the offer of a trip to Lisbon; Coleridge, less practical and far-seeing than his friend, with many reproaches and expostula-

tions, at length relinquished the prospect of life in the new world, and stayed at home to write "Christabel" and "The Ancient Mariner;" while Quaker Lovell, poor fellow, got ready to take the far longer journey to "the undiscovered country." So ended the dream of a Utopia in the West.

Coleridge and his bride, having been united in Bristol, on October 4th, 1795, at St. Mary Redcliffe, engaged a cottage at Clevedon, under conditions of Arcadian simplicity, and for the time being things went happily enough. But literature, taken up as a means of livelihood, did not prove very remunerative. To supplement his resources, he started a weekly paper, *The Watchman*, but it only ran from March to May. A month earlier in this year (1796), a small book of verse was put forth, under the title of "Poems on Various Subjects, by S. T. Coleridge"; it was issued by Cottle, of Bristol, who paid the author thirty guineas for the copyright. It contained, among other pieces, the once highly-praised "Religious Musings," and the pretty fanciful lines "Songs of the Pixies." It seems to have met with no very encouraging reception. Before the close of the year, it was followed by twenty-four sonnets privately printed, and by an ode "To the Departing Year." Coleridge also had a share in Southey's "Joan of Arc."

Sara Coleridge, meanwhile, had given birth to her first child, who was christened Hartley. Two of the poet's sonnets are founded on the happy event. With the approach of winter the isolation of the Clevedon cottage became irksome, and the Coleridge household removed to new quarters at Nether Stowey. The acquaintance of Wordsworth was now a pleasant

fact. Coleridge had long recognised his merit as a writer, and personal intimacy with the Cumberland poet and his sweet sister Dorothy was destined to bring much mutual happiness.

Brother and sister had settled close by, at Alfoxden. Talks at their house and walks over the hills in their company could not but be productive in an intellectual sense, for all three were in sympathy. One distinct literary effort had an immediate and practical object, viz., to raise money to cover the outlay on a walking tour to Linton. One smiles to think of paying the cost of a holiday by bringing out a book of poems. Hope, however, was strong. The book went to press with nineteen pieces by Wordsworth and four by Coleridge. It was published by Mr. Cottle, at Bristol, in 1798, anonymously, and under the title of "Lyrical Ballads" (see Wordsworth, pp. 215-6). It attracted very little notice; and when the copyright passed, with the rest of Cottle's business, into the hands of Longmans, of London, it was reckoned of no practical value.

In "The Ancient Mariner," which was Coleridge's chief contribution to this volume, his powers are revealed at their highest. As a mere story the subject matter is fanciful, but under the subtle alchemy of so exquisite a genius the unreality is lost, and the effect is irresistible. We feel it not the least in passages that surprise us by their quaint simplicity and unsophisticated truthfulness. Brevity and conciseness never fail, restraint is never relaxed. There is no rambling away into commonplace; even in the imagery the reader has scarcely realised the beauty of one figure before the narrative resumes its interest, or yet another simile claims his admiration.

All is quick, tense, and nervous; sprightly in rhythm, concentrated in effect, apt and succinct in expression. The charm of its Saxon English never seems assumed or strained. Its scenes of weird horror fascinate but never repel. The cry of despair from that scorched deck in mid-ocean is utterly free from theatrical impressiveness; even in those parts that most abound with ornament we are hurried away from their contemplation with an impetuosity which forbids us to look back; half a dozen short verses bring us from the fogs and ice-floes of arctic seas to the hot silence of a tropic calm. Who ever painted the swift fall of the southern night as Coleridge did in two lines?—

> "The sun's rim dips, the stars rush out,
> At one stride comes the dark."

Where can we find a thought more beautiful than that which shows the guilty sufferer as being saved by his own impulse of loving sympathy with the happy water-snakes that sported before him as he lay in torments of remorse and pain? And in the closing reference to the village kirk what a restful hush, as of an evening benediction, comes upon the excited sense after its hurried transit through the regions of frost and mist and fire! Coleridge never before or after wrote anything equal to it in its way; nor, perhaps, has any other of our poets.

One or two pieces, written or half-written, were crowded out of the "Lyrical Ballads." Among these were the "Dark Ladie," and the first part of "Christabel." The structural peculiarity of the

latter consists in the substitution of accents for syllables in the measurement of the lines; this is seen in the opening stanza, where the four beats to a line render uniform what is apparently most irregular verse. This innovation greatly disturbed the reviewers, and the *Edinburgh*, later on, screamed at it as "the most notable piece of impertinence, of which the press has lately been guilty."

The composition of this poem, though it was never finished, must have been a congenial task. The suggestion of supernatural agencies, hovering behind, and serving as a foil to, a foreground of human interests and feelings, was a theme Coleridge would delight in. The air of witchery which pervades the opening scene, the painful sense of impending harm, the undefined foreboding which follows every turn of the story, from the mystery in the leafless wood to the warning dream of the faithful bard, all exemplify the delicate touch and the psychological insight of the poet. We could wish away several slip-shod lines and certain passages bordering on the ludicrous, which escaped the author's revising pen. Christabel must ever rank higher in the estimation of poets than of critics.

It was a prolific period in Coleridge's literary career. Now, also, were written "Osorio," a tragedy; "The Three Graves," a village sexton's tale; "Fears in Solitude," penned at Nether Stowey during an alarm of a French invasion; "France," an ode of stately measure; and the fragment of "Kubla Khan," interesting, apart from its rhythmical charm, for the exceptional conditions under which it was composed. The author had retired, in the summer

of 1797, to a lonely farmhouse on Exmoor, and an anodyne, medically prescribed, had rendered him drowsy over his reading. A passage in Purchas's "Pilgrimage" had caught his eye as he fell asleep. His active brain forthwith composed several hundred lines of verse on the subject. On awaking he clearly remembered these, and was in the act of putting them on paper when the impression was hopelessly broken by a summons to see a visitor.

It is a suggestive fact that "Kubla Khan" and "The Ancient Mariner," two such characteristic poems, had their source directly or indirectly in a dream. For, blended with his profound philosophical and analytical power, there was in Coleridge a dreamy languor, the artistic results of which display themselves frequently in his poetry, but which tended to serious moral lassitude in him as a man. It was like the panting warmth of Oriental feeling which throbs and passes, leaving enervation and supineness behind it. In reverie he planned a multitude of works, but the period of execution was postponed, till conscious of his failing powers he cried aloud in his remorse, bewailing that "shaping spirit of Imagination," which was with him no more.

Of Coleridge's attitude towards Nature much has been said and written. He maintained the intimate connection and correspondence between the world of thought and the world of physical scenery, believing

> "That outward forms, the loftiest, still receive
> Their finer influence from the world within."

And in "The Æolian Harp" he hazards the suggestion :—

"What if all of animated nature
Be but organic harps diversely framed,
That tremble into thought, as o'er them sweeps,
Plastic and vast, one intellectual breeze,
At once the Soul of each and God of all?"

Coleridge held (if, as it would seem, this theory became a conviction) that whatever we discern of beautiful or sublime in woods, and hills, and waters, is owing to our own thought playing upon them; but that this power of appreciation, developed most highly in the pure heart, and almost absent in "the sensual and the proud," is really the Divine Thought passing through us. Hence the reflex influence of Nature is the influence of the Spirit of God.

A temporary alienation from Charles Lamb, his lifelong friend, shadowed the year 1798. Lectures at Bristol, which left but small profits, a short-lived preaching engagement at a Unitarian Chapel in Shrewsbury, and sundry odds and ends of literary work, brought very little grist to the financial mill. Debts, too, ominously large or irritatingly small and petty, harassed him. It was not until a generous offer came from some recent acquaintances, the brothers Wedgwood, that things began to look hopeful once more. These two fosterers of English ceramic art, seeing and appreciating the rare merit of the needy poet-lecturer, promised him an annuity of £150 if he would relinquish the pulpit and apply himself wholly to literature. Coleridge, who was then residing at Shrewsbury with Hazlitt, gladly accepted the offer. The open purse of his new benefactors also enabled him to travel in Germany and learn the language, in order

to qualify himself for work as a translator. During the early part of the tour Wordsworth and his sister were with him, and together they visited the aged Klopstock. Then Coleridge struck off to Ratzeburgh and Göttingen, and after a ramble among the Harz Mountains, came home to Nether Stowey.

Later on we find him in London translating Schiller's "Wallenstein." It was done in six weeks, and published by Longmans in 1800, but was not a pecuniary success. A guinea a week for verses and light sketches in the *Morning Post* was most acceptable. Gradually, however, he acquired the superintendence, and to a great extent the writing, both of the literary and political sections of the paper, and with such ability did he labour that the circulation was doubled. The eventual result was an offer from Stuart, the proprietor, of half shares in the *Morning Post* and the *Courier*. "I could make sure of £2,000 a year," wrote Coleridge, "but I told him I could not give up the country and the lazy reading of old folios; . . . in short, that beyond £350 a year I considered money as a real evil." Altogether a very delightful admission to those who love the poet, and a very mad one to men of business. By the summer of 1800 he had flitted northward and joined Wordsworth at the Lakes. Half of Greta Hall, charmingly situated near Keswick, soon sheltered the Coleridge household, at the modest rental of £25 per annum. A second edition of the "Lyrical Ballads" included the beautiful ballad "Love."

For the next two years his journalistic contributions continued, and he wrote the second part of

"Christabel." It still remained a fragment, though the conclusion was planned. In the summer of 1802, soon after his ode "Dejection" was penned, Charles and Mary Lamb paid a welcome visit to Greta Hall, and the two whilom bluecoat boys chatted and smoked and jested with infinite relish. Lamb greatly enjoyed the mountains, and Coleridge's habitual feelings may be gauged by a sentence or two from one of his letters: "I never find myself alone within the embracement of rocks and hills . . . but my spirit careers, drives, and eddies, like a leaf in autumn; a wild activity of thoughts, imaginations, feelings, and impulses of motion rises up from within me. . . . I think that my soul must have pre-existed in the body of a chamois chaser." What Coleridge felt when deeper thoughts took the place of mere mental exhilaration is manifest from such lines as those in the "Hymn before Sunrise in the Vale of Chamouni," where the splendid imagination of the poet is seen bowed in worship, reverence, and awe.

In 1803 Southey brought his family to occupy the other half of Greta Hall. Wordsworth had lately married, but he found means to take a tour through Scotland with Dorothy and Coleridge. The tour had consequences at once unfortunate and far-reaching. Coleridge's boyhood foe, rheumatism, reappeared; and a quack medicine which he used proved to be nothing more or less than opium. The fatal appetite was thus engendered, and from this, the high-water mark of his life's happiness, he went slowly down into depths of gloom and misery. The thirty-one years that lay behind him could show a very creditable total of work; his home was full of

love and peace, and his powers, naturally great, had been rendered facile and expert by genuine hard toil. There was, however, a constitutional weakness which had already shown itself in habitual infirmity of purpose, and in a morbid self-introspection which at times grew positively painful. On these qualities the insidious drug began to operate with startling effect. In April, 1804, he accepted the offer of a trip to Malta, and broke his homeward journey by a long sojourn at Rome. But he returned miserable in body and mind, "ill, penniless, and worse than homeless." Homeless, not because his wife had ceased to love him, not because there were no bright eyes of children watching for him who was wont to fondle and caress them, not because poverty had flung his family adrift on the world, but homeless because a ruined will, a disordered temperament, a morbid craving, held him back with spectral hands. There are few scenes in the history of letters more pathetically dramatic.

Coleridge summoned up nerve, indeed, at last to visit Greta Hall, but conscience made terrible the natural questionings and looks of mute reproach which he met. He had long ago settled on his wife the Wedgwood annuity, and feeling himself only a burden to their peace, he left his relatives and went down to find Wordsworth; but the industry of the latter was a rebuke to him. He was soon off once more, and we find him fraternising with young De Quincey in Bridgewater. Then he dropped again into journalism, and a life of lonely lodgings in London. In 1806–7 he lectured at the Royal Institution. In 1808 he returned to the Lakes, but took up his abode with the Wordsworths at Grasmere.

While at Grasmere Coleridge started a new journal, *The Friend*, devoted to the discussion of philosophy, art, literature, and politics. It had a run of only twenty-seven numbers. Then, in 1810, Coleridge went back to Greta Hall, and after five months left it for ever. Renewed journalism in London, this time of the most menial and drudging kind, and more literary lecturing, alone saved him from absolute penury. In 1813, by good fortune, his tragedy of "Osorio," long neglected by the Drury Lane committee, was, through the friendly offices of Lord Byron, put on the stage, under the title of "Remorse." It was a great success, and Coleridge netted a handsome sum. He followed it up with "Zapolya," which the managers declined.

Meanwhile the evil habit held him in a thraldom which was terrible. In vain he seems to have struggled against its hideous power. Like the captive genie in the Arabian tale, it had grown with liberty to a giant fiend, menacing and overshadowing his whole life. Nights of agonised prayer, renewals of impotent resolve, self-distrust, self-contempt, passionate self-reproach—it was like the fate of some whom Dante saw in vision, helpless, and all but hopeless. And yet, strange as it may appear, although the sovereign will was shattered, the moral sense in Coleridge stood apart, dilating with shame and scorn, like a wounded angel, undishonoured though disarmed.

A remedy ere long presented itself which bade fair to check the vicious habit. At their house, in The Grove, Highgate, good Dr. Gillman and his wife received Coleridge, at his own request, in the double capacity of lodger and patient. Early in 1816 he

removed thither, and thus added yet another to the many shining names in our literature that have clustered round the northern heights of London. Here Coleridge revised the proof-sheets of "Christabel," which was published by Murray in June of this year. It had been warmly commended in manuscript; it was roughly and contemptuously handled when in print. Nevertheless, it ran into a second edition during its first year. In 1817 his "Biographia Literaria," dealing with his own career as an author, but containing more philosophical digressions than practical narrative, was brought forth and was duly chastised by the reviewers. "Zapolya" was next put in type, and sold well as a Christmas story. The same year appeared "Sibylline Leaves," a collection of hitherto scattered pieces.

At intervals his children would come to see him, and with Wordsworth he kept up communications to the last. The end came on Friday, 25th July, 1834, and loving hands laid him to rest in Highgate churchyard.

The poet's last days, painful with disappointed hopes and gross depreciation, were somewhat brightened by the visits of a number of young men of mark who rallied admiringly round the grey-haired sage. Irving and Maurice, Hallam and Hare, and Green, made Mr. Gillman's house an intellectual rendezvous. And we know, at least, that Keats and Coleridge had clasped hands.

We think of the Coleridge of Highgate, however, rather as the exponent of German metaphysics than as the brilliant musician in words. The lamp of philosophy burned steadily through those clouded days, but the star of poetry had set.

Coleridge retained to the last his charm of conversation. Mrs. Cowden-Clarke's description was not, perhaps, overdrawn: "His elevated tone, as he rolled forth his gorgeous sentences, his lofty look, his sustained flow of language, his sublime utterance, gave the effect of some magnificent organ peal." And by Wordsworth, who had known the magic of that voice in other and happier years, it was compared to "a majestic river, the sound or sight of whose course you caught at intervals; which was sometimes concealed by forests, sometimes lost in sand; then came flashing out broad and distinct; and even when it took a turn which your eye could not follow, yet you always felt and knew that there was a connection in its parts and that it was the same river."

But it is the Coleridge of earlier days that one loves to contemplate—the Coleridge of Pantisocrat schemes, of generous enthusiasms, of early ideals from which cold experience had not yet brushed the bloom. There really seems no affinity—in one sense there was no affinity—between the young grey-eyed visionary, planning the "Lyrical Ballads," as he strode over the downs at Wordsworth's side, and the broken-down recluse, feebly pacing under the old limes and elms before Mr. Gillman's house at Highgate.

It is idle to speculate upon "what might have been," in Coleridge's life, had the causes which blighted and darkened it been resolutely avoided: but suppositions instinctively will rise. Let us rest thankful that, while it was yet day with him, such inimitable work was given to the world.

HORACE G. GROSER.

EARLIER POEMS.

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE.

I.—TIME, REAL AND IMAGINARY.

AN ALLEGORY.

About 1787.

ON the wide level of a mountain's head,
(I knew not where, but 'twas some faery place)
Their pinions, ostrich-like, for sails outspread,
Two lovely children run an endless race,
A sister and a brother!
That far outstripp'd the other;
Yet ever runs she with reverted face,
And looks and listens for the boy behind:
For he, alas! is blind!
O'er rough and smooth with even step he pass'd,
And knows not whether he be first or last.[1]

II.—TO LAFAYETTE

As when far off the warbled strains are heard,
That soar on Morning's wing the vales among,
Within his cage th' imprisoned matin bird
Swells the full chorus with a generous song:
He bathes no pinion in the dewy light,
No father's joy, no lover's bliss he shares,
Yet still the rising radiance cheers his sight—
His fellows' freedom soothes the captive's cares:
Thou, Fayette! who didst wake with startling voice
Life's better sun from that long wintry night,
Thus in thy country's triumphs shalt rejoice,
And mock with raptures high the dungeon's might:
For lo! the morning struggles into day,
And Slavery's spectres shriek and vanish from the ray!

III.—ON THE BIRTH OF A SON.

Composed on a journey homeward; the author having received intelligence of the birth of a son, Sept. 20th, 1796.[2]

Oft o'er my brain does that strange fancy roll
Which makes the present (while the flash doth last)
Seem a mere semblance of some unknown past,
Mix'd with such feelings, as perplex the soul
Self-question'd in her sleep: and some have said
We lived, ere yet this robe of flesh we wore.
O my sweet Baby! when I reach my door,
If heavy looks should tell me, thou art dead,
(As sometimes, through excess of hope, I fear,)
I think, that I should struggle to believe
Thou wert a spirit, to this nether sphere
Sentenced for some more venial crime to grieve;
Did'st scream, then spring to meet Heaven's quick reprie
While we wept idly o'er thy little bier!

IV.—TO A FRIEND ON THE SAME.

To a Friend who asked how I felt when the nurse first presented my Infant to me.

Charles![3] my slow heart was only sad, when first
I scann'd that face of feeble infancy:
For dimly on my thoughtful spirit burst
All I had been, and all my child might be!
But when I saw it on its mother's arm,
And hanging at her bosom (she the while
Bent o'er its features with a tearful smile,)
Then I was thrill'd and melted, and most warm
Impress'd a Father's kiss: and all beguiled
Of dark remembrance and presageful fear,
I seem'd to see an angel-form appear—
'Twas even thine, beloved woman mild!
So for the mother's sake the child was dear,
And dearer was the mother for the child.

MEDITATIVE POEMS.

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE.

THE ÆOLIAN HARP.

COMPOSED AT CLEVEDON, SOMERSETSHIRE. 1795.

MY pensive Sara! thy soft cheek reclined
Thus on mine arm, most soothing-sweet it is
To sit beside our cot, our cot o'ergrown
With white-flower'd jasmin, and the broad-leaved myrtle,
(Meet emblems they of Innocence and Love!)
And watch the clouds, that late were rich with light,
Slow-saddening round, and mark the star of eve
Serenely brilliant (such should wisdom be)
Shine opposite! How exquisite the scents
Snatch'd from yon bean-field! and the world *so* hush'd!
The stilly murmur of the distant sea
Tells us of silence. And that simplest lute,
Placed length-ways in the clasping casement, hark!
How by the desultory breeze caress'd,
Like some coy maid half-yielding to her lover,
It pours such sweet upbraiding, as must needs
Tempt to repeat the wrong! And now, its strings
Boldlier swept, the long sequacious notes
Over delicious surges sink and rise,
Such a soft floating witchery of sound
As twilight Elfins make, when they at eve
Voyage on gentle gales from Fairy-Land,
Where melodies round honey-dropping flowers,
Footless and wild, like birds of Paradise,
Nor pause, nor perch, hovering on untamed wing.
O! the one life within us and abroad,
Which meets all motion and becomes its soul,
A light in sound, a sound-like power in light,
Rhythm in all thought, and joyance everywhere!
Methinks, it should have been impossible

Not to love all things in a world so fill'd,
Where the breeze warbles and the mute still air
Is Music slumbering on her instrument!
And thus, my love! as on the midway slope
Of yonder hill I stretch my limbs at noon,
Whilst through my half-closed eyelids I behold
The sunbeams dance, like diamonds, on the main,
And tranquil muse upon tranquillity;
Full many a thought uncall'd and undetain'd,
And many idle flitting phantasies,
Traverse my indolent and passive brain,
As wild and various as the random gales
That swell and flutter on this subject lute!

And what if all of animated nature
Be but organic harps diversely framed
That tremble into thought, as o'er them sweeps,
Plastic and vast, one intellectual breeze,
At once the Soul of each, and God of all?
But thy more serious eye a mild reproof
Darts, O belovèd woman! nor such thoughts
Dim and unhallowed dost thou not reject,
And biddest me walk humbly with my God.
Meek daughter in the family of Christ!
Well hast thou said and holily dispraised
These shapings of the unregenerate mind;
Bubbles that glitter as they rise and break
On vain Philosophy's aye-babbling spring.
For never guiltless may I speak of Him,
The Incomprehensible! save when with awe
I praise Him, and with faith that inly feels;
Who with His saving mercies healèd me,
A sinful and most miserable man,
Wilder'd and dark, and gave me to possess
Peace, and this cot, and thee, heart-honour'd maid.

REFLECTIONS

ON HAVING LEFT A PLACE OF RETIREMENT.

1796.

"Sermoni propiora."—*Hor.*

LOW was our pretty cot: our tallest rose
Peep'd at the chamber-window. We could hear
At silent noon, and eve, and early morn,
The sea's faint murmur. In the open air
Our myrtles blossom'd; and across the porch
Thick jasmins twined: the little landscape round
Was green and woody, and refresh'd the eye.
It was a spot which you might aptly call
The Valley of Seclusion! Once I saw
(Hallowing his Sabbath-day by quietness)
A wealthy son of commerce saunter by,
Bristowa's citizen: methought, it calm'd
His thirst of idle gold, and made him muse
With wiser feelings; for he paused, and look'd
With a pleased sadness, and gazed all around,
Then eyed our Cottage, and gazed round again,
And sigh'd, and said it was a Blessed Place.
And we *were* blessèd. Oft with patient ear
Long-listening to the viewless sky-lark's note,
(Viewless, or haply for a moment seen
Gleaming on sunny wings,) in whisper'd tones
I've said to my beloved, "Such, sweet girl!
The inobtrusive song of happiness,
Unearthly minstrelsy! then only heard
When the soul seeks to hear; when all is hush'd,
And the heart listens!"

But the time, when first
From that low dell, steep up the stony mount
I climb'd with perilous toil and reach'd the top,
Oh! what a goodly scene! Here the bleak mount,
The bare bleak mountain speckled thin with sheep;
Grey clouds, that shadowing spot the sunny fields:
And river, now with bushy rocks o'erbrow'd,
Now winding bright and full, with naked banks;
And seats, and lawns, the Abbey, and the wood,
And cots, and hamlets, and faint city-spire:
The channel there, the islands and white sails,
Dim coasts, and cloud-like hills, and shoreless Ocean—
It seem'd like Omnipresence! God, methought,
Had built Him there a temple: the whole world
Seem'd imaged in its vast circumference;
No wish profaned my overwhelmèd heart.
Blest hour! It was a luxury,—to be!

Ah! quiet dell! dear cot, and mount sublime!
I was constrain'd to quit you. Was it right,
While my unnumber'd brethren toil'd and bled,
That I should dream away the entrusted hours
On rose-leaf beds, pampering the coward heart
With feelings all too delicate for use?
Sweet is the tear that from some Howard's eye
Drops on the cheek of one he lifts from earth:
And he that works me good with unmoved face,
Does it but half: he chills me while he aids,
My benefactor, not my brother man!
Yet even this, this cold beneficence,
Praise, praise it, O my soul! oft as thou scann'st
The sluggard Pity's vision-weaving tribe!
Who sigh for wretchedness, yet shun the wretched,

Nursing in some delicious solitude
Their slothful loves and dainty sympathies!
I therefore go, and join head, heart, and hand,
Active and firm, to fight the bloodless fight
Of science, freedom, and the truth in Christ.

Yet oft when after honourable toil
Rests the tired mind, and waking loves to dream,
My spirit shall revisit thee, dear Cot!
Thy jasmin and thy window-peeping rose,
And myrtles fearless of the mild sea-air.
And I shall sigh fond wishes—sweet abode!
Ah!—had none greater! and that all had such!
It might be so—but the time is not yet.
Speed it, O Father; Let Thy kingdom come.

FROST AT MIDNIGHT.

February, 1798.

THE frost performs its secret ministry,
Unhelp'd by any wind. The owlet's cry
Came loud—and hark, again! loud as before.
The inmates of my cottage, all at rest,
Have left me to that solitude, which suits
Abstruser musings: save that at my side
My cradled infant slumbers peacefully.
'Tis calm indeed! so calm, that it disturbs
And vexes meditation with its strange
And extreme silentness. Sea, hill, and wood,
This populous village! Sea, and hill, and wood,
With all the numberless goings on of life,
Inaudible as dreams! The thin blue flame
Lies on my low-burnt fire, and quivers not;
Only that film, which flutter'd on the grate,
Still flutters there, the sole unquiet thing.
Methinks, its motion in this hush of nature
Gives it dim sympathies with me who live,
Making it a companionable form,
Whose puny flaps and freaks the idling spirit
By its own moods interprets, everywhere
Echo or mirror seeking of itself,
And makes a toy of thought.

But O! how oft,
How oft, at school, with most believing mind,
Presageful, have I gazed upon the bars,

To watch that fluttering stranger! and as oft,
With unclosed lids, already had I dreamt
Of my sweet birth-place, and the old church-tower,
Whose bells, the poor man's only music, rang
From morn to evening, all the hot Fair-day,
So sweetly, that they stirr'd and haunted me
With a wild pleasure, falling on mine ear
Most like articulate sounds of things to come!
So gazed I, till the soothing things I dreamt
Lull'd me to sleep, and sleep prolong'd my dreams!
And so I brooded all the following morn,
Awed by the stern preceptor's face, mine eye
Fix'd with mock study on my swimming book:
Save if the door half open'd, and I snatch'd
A hasty glance, and still my heart leap'd up,
For still I hoped to see the stranger's face,
Townsman, or aunt, or sister more beloved,
My play-mate when we both were clothed alike!

Dear Babe, that sleepest cradled by my side,
Whose gentle breathings, heard in this deep calm,
Fill up the interspersed vacancies
And momentary pauses of the thought!
My babe so beautiful! it thrills my heart
With tender gladness, thus to look at thee,
And think that thou shalt learn far other lore
And in far other scenes! For I was rear'd
In the great city, pent 'mid cloisters dim,
And saw nought lovely but the sky and stars.
But thou, my babe! shalt wander like a breeze
By lakes and sandy shores, beneath the crags
Of ancient mountain, and beneath the clouds,
Which image in their bulk both lakes and shores
And mountain crags: so shalt thou see and hear

The lovely shapes and sounds intelligible
Of that eternal language, which thy God
Utters, who from eternity doth teach
Himself in all, and all things in Himself.
Great universal Teacher! He shall mould
Thy spirit, and by giving make it ask.

Therefore all seasons shall be sweet to thee,
Whether the summer clothe the general earth
With greenness, or the redbreast sit and sing
Betwixt the tufts of snow on the bare branch
Of mossy apple-tree, while the nigh thatch
Smokes in the sun-thaw; whether the eve-drops fall,
Heard only in the trances of the blast,
Or if the secret ministry of frost
Shall hang them up in silent icicles,
Quietly shining to the quiet moon.

THE NIGHTINGALE;

CONVERSATION POEM, WRITTEN IN APRIL, 1798.

NO cloud, no relic of the sunken day
Distinguishes the West, no long thin slip
Of sullen light, no obscure trembling hues.
Come, we will rest on this old mossy bridge!
You see the glimmer of the stream beneath,
But hear no murmuring: it flows silently,
O'er its soft bed of verdure. All is still,—
A balmy night! and though the stars be dim,
Yet let us think upon the vernal showers
That gladden the green earth, and we shall find
A pleasure in the dimness of the stars.
And hark! the Nightingale begins its song,
"Most musical, most melancholy" bird!
A melancholy bird? Oh! idle thought!
In Nature there is nothing melancholy.
But some night-wandering man, whose heart was pierced
With the remembrance of a grievous wrong,
Or slow distemper, or neglected love,
(And so, poor wretch! fill'd all things with himself,
And made all gentle sounds tell back the tale
Of his own sorrow,) he, and such as he,
First named these notes a melancholy strain.
And many a poet echoes the conceit;
Poet who hath been building up the rhyme
When he had better far have stretch'd his limbs
Beside a brook in mossy forest-dell,

By sun or moon-light, to the influxes
Of shapes and sounds and shifting elements
Surrendering his whole spirit, of his song
And of his fame forgetful! so his fame
Should share in Nature's immortality,
A venerable thing! and so his song
Should make all Nature lovelier, and itself
Be loved like Nature! But 'twill not be so;
And youths and maidens most poetical,
Who lose the deepening twilights of the spring
In ball-rooms and hot theatres, they still
Full of meek sympathy must heave their sighs
O'er Philomela's pity-pleading strains.

My Friend, and thou, our Sister! we have learnt
A different lore: we may not thus profane
Nature's sweet voices, always full of love
And joyance! 'Tis the merry Nightingale
That crowds, and hurries, and precipitates,
With fast thick warble his delicious notes,
As he were fearful that an April night
Would be too short for him to utter forth
His love-chant, and disburthen his full soul
Of all its music!

And I know a grove
Of large extent, hard by a castle huge,
Which the great lord inhabits not; and so
This grove is wild with tangling underwood,
And the trim walks are broken up, and grass,
Thin grass and king-cups grow within the paths.
But never elsewhere in one place I knew
So many nightingales; and far and near,
In wood and thicket, over the wide grove,

They answer and provoke each other's song,
With skirmish and capricious passagings,
And murmurs musical and swift jug jug,
And one low piping sound more sweet than all;
Stirring the air with such a harmony,
That should you close your eyes, you might almost
Forget it was not day! On moon-lit bushes,
Whose dewy leaflets are but half disclosed,
You may perchance behold them on the twigs,
Their bright, bright eyes, their eyes both bright and full,
Glistening, while many a glow-worm in the shade
Lights up her love-torch.

A most gentle Maid,
Who dwelleth in her hospitable home
Hard by the castle, and at latest eve
(Even like a Lady vowed and dedicate
To something more than Nature in the grove)
Glides through the pathways; she knows all their notes,
That gentle Maid! and oft a moment's space,
What time the moon was lost behind a cloud,
Hath heard a pause of silence; till the moon
Emerging, hath awaken'd earth and sky
With one sensation, and these wakeful birds
Have all burst forth in choral minstrelsy,
As if some sudden gale had swept at once
A hundred airy harps! And she hath watch'd
Many a Nightingale perch'd giddily
On blossomy twig still swinging from the breeze,
And to that motion tune his wanton song
Like tipsy Joy that reels with tossing head.
Farewell, O Warbler! till to morrow eve,
And you, my friends! farewell, a short farewell!

We have been loitering long and pleasantly,
And now for our dear homes.—That strain again?
Full fain it would delay me! My dear babe,
Who, capable of no articulate sound,
Mars all things with his imitative lisp,
How he would place his hand beside his ear,
His little hand, the small forefinger up,
And bid us listen! And I deem it wise
To make him Nature's play-mate. He knows well
The evening-star; and once, when he awoke
In most distressful mood (some inward pain
Had made up that strange thing, an infant's dream,)
I hurried with him to our orchard plot,
And he beheld the moon, and, hush'd at once,
Suspends his sobs, and laughs most silently,
While his fair eyes, that swam with undropp'd tears,
Did glitter in the yellow moon-beam!—Well!
It is a father's tale: But if that Heaven
Should give me life, his childhood shall grow up
Familiar with these songs, that with the night
He may associate joy!—Once more, farewell,
Sweet Nightingale! Once more, my friends! farewell.

HYMN

BEFORE SUNRISE, IN THE VALE OF CHAMOUNI.

1802.

Besides the rivers Arve and Arveiron, which have their sources in the foot of Mont Blanc, five conspicuous torrents rush down its sides; and within a few paces of the glaciers the *gentiana major* grows in immense numbers with its "flowers of loveliest blue."

HAST thou a charm to stay the morning-star
In his steep course? So long he seems to pause
On thy bald awful head, O sovran Blanc!
The Arve and Arveiron at thy base
Rave ceaselessly; but thou, most awful form!
Risest from forth thy silent sea of pines,
How silently! Around thee and above
Deep is the air and dark, substantial, black,
An ebon mass: methinks thou piercest it,
As with a wedge! But when I look again,
It is thine own calm home, thy crystal shrine,
Thy habitation from eternity!
O dread and silent Mount! I gazed upon thee,
Till thou, still present to the bodily sense,
Didst vanish from my thought: entranced in prayer
I worshipp'd the Invisible alone.

Yet, like some sweet beguiling melody,
So sweet, we know not we are listening to it,
Thou, the meanwhile, wast blending with my thought,
Yea, with my life and life's own secret joy:
Till the dilating Soul, enrapt, transfused,
Into the mighty vision passing—there
As in her natural form, swell'd vast to Heaven!

Awake, my soul! not only passive praise
Thou owest! not alone these swelling tears,
Mute thanks and secret ecstasy! Awake,
Voice of sweet song! Awake, my heart, awake!
Green vales and icy cliffs, all join my Hymn.

Thou first and chief, sole sovran of the Vale!
O, struggling with the darkness all the night,
And visited all night by troops of stars,
Or when they climb the sky or when they sink:
Companion of the morning-star at dawn,
Thyself Earth's rosy star, and of the dawn
Co-herald! wake, O wake, and utter praise!
Who sank thy sunless pillars deep in Earth?
Who fill'd thy countenance with rosy light?
Who made thee parent of perpetual streams?

And you, ye five wild torrents fiercely glad!
Who call'd you forth from night and utter death,
From dark and icy caverns, call'd you forth,
Down those precipitous, black, jagged rocks,
For ever shatter'd and the same for ever?
Who gave you your invulnerable life,
Your strength, your speed, your fury, and your joy,
Unceasing thunder and eternal foam?
And who commanded (and the silence came),
Here let the billows stiffen, and have rest?

Ye ice-falls! ye that from the mountain's brow
Adown enormous ravines slope amain—
Torrents, methinks, that heard a mighty voice,
And stopp'd at once amid their maddest plunge
Motionless torrents! silent cataracts!

Who made you glorious as the gates of Heaven
Beneath the keen full moon? Who bade the sun
Clothe you with rainbows? Who, with living flowers
Of loveliest blue, spread garlands at your feet?—
God! let the torrents, like a shout of nations,
Answer! and let the ice-plains echo, God!
God! sing ye meadow-streams with gladsome voice!
Ye pine-groves, with your soft and soul-like sounds!
And they too have a voice, yon piles of snow,
And in their perilous fall shall thunder, God!

Ye living flowers that skirt the eternal frost!
Ye wild goats sporting round the eagle's nest!
Ye eagles, play-mates of the mountain-storm!
Ye lightnings, the dread arrows of the clouds!
Ye signs and wonders of the element!
Utter forth God, and fill the hills with praise!

Thou too, hoar Mount! with thy sky-pointing peaks,
Oft from whose feet the avalanche, unheard,
Shoots downward, glittering through the pure serene,
Into the depth of clouds, that veil thy breast—
Thou, too, again, stupendous Mountain! thou
That as I raise my head, awhile bow'd low
In adoration, upward from thy base
Slow travelling with dim eyes suffused with tears,
Solemnly seemest, like a vapoury cloud,
To rise before me—Rise, O ever rise,
Rise like a cloud of incense, from the Earth
Thou kingly spirit throned among the hills,
Thou dread ambassador from earth to heaven,
Great hierarch! tell thou the silent sky,
And tell the stars, and tell yon rising sun,
Earth with her thousand voices, praises God.

LOVE POEMS.

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE.

LEWTI,

OR THE CIRCASSIAN LOVE-CHANT.

About 1797.

AT midnight by the stream I roved,
To forget the form I loved.
Image of Lewti! from my mind
Depart; for Lewti is not kind.

The moon was high, the moonlight gleam,
And the shadow of a star,
Heaved upon Tamaha's stream;
But the rock shone brighter far,
The rock half shelter'd from my view
By pendent boughs of tressy yew.
So shines my Lewti's forehead fair,
Gleaming through her sable hair.
Image of Lewti! from my mind
Depart; for Lewti is not kind.

I saw a cloud of palest hue,—
Onward to the moon it pass'd:
Still brighter and more bright it grew,
With floating colours not a few,
Till it reach'd the moon at last;
Then the cloud was wholly bright,
With a rich and amber light!

And so with many a hope I seek,
  And with such joy I find my Lewti;
And even so my pale wan cheek
  Drinks in as deep a flush of beauty!
Nay, treacherous image! leave my mind,
If Lewti never will be kind.

The little cloud—it floats away,
  Away it goes; away so soon?
Alas! it has no power to stay:
Its hues are dim, its hues are grey—
  Away it passes from the moon!
How mournfully it seems to fly,
  Ever fading more and more,
To joyless regions of the sky—
  And now 'tis whiter than before!
As white as my poor cheek will be,
  When, Lewti! on my couch I lie,
A dying man for love of thee.
Nay, treacherous image! leave my mind—
And yet, thou did'st not look unkind.

I saw a vapour in the sky,
  Thin, and white, and very high:
I ne'er beheld so thin a cloud.
  Perhaps the breezes that can fly
  Now below and now above,
Have snatch'd aloft the lawny shroud
  Of Lady fair—that died for love.
For maids, as well as youths, have perish'd
From fruitless love too fondly cherish'd.
Nay, treacherous image! leave my mind—
For Lewti never will be kind.

Hush! my heedless feet from under
Slip the crumbling banks for ever:
Like echoes to a distant thunder,
They plunge into the gentle river.
The river-swans have heard my tread,
And startle from their reedy bed.
O beauteous birds! methinks ye measure
Your movements to some heavenly tune!
O beauteous birds! 'tis such a pleasure
To see you move beneath the moon,
I would it were your true delight
To sleep by day and wake all night.

I know the place where Lewti lies,
When silent night has closed her eyes;
It is a breezy jasmine-bower,
The nightingale sings o'er her head:
Voice of the night, had I the power
That leafy labyrinth to thread,
And creep, like thee, with soundless tread,
I then might view her bosom white
Heaving lovely to my sight,
As these two swans together heave
On the gently swelling wave.

Oh! that she saw me in a dream,
And dreamt that I had died for care!
All pale and wasted I would seem
Yet fair withal, as spirits are!
I'd die indeed, if I might see
Her bosom heave, and heave for me!
Soothe, gentle image! soothe my mind!
To-morrow Lewti may be kind.

LOVE.[4]

1797-9.

ALL thoughts, all passions, all delights,
Whatever stirs this mortal frame,
All are but ministers of Love,
And feed his sacred flame.

Oft in my waking dreams do I
Live o'er again that happy hour,
When midway on the mount I lay,
Beside the ruin'd tower.

The moonshine, stealing o'er the scene,
Had blended with the lights of eve;
And she was there, my hope, my joy,
My own dear Genevieve!

She leaned against the armèd man,
The statue of the armèd knight;
She stood and listen'd to my lay,
Amid the lingering light.

Few sorrows hath she of her own,
My hope! my joy! my Genevieve!
She loves me best whene'er I sing
The songs that make her grieve.

I play'd a soft and doleful air;
I sang an old and moving story—
An old rude song, that suited well
That ruin, wild and hoary.

She listen'd with a flitting blush,
With downcast eyes and modest grace;
For well she knew I could not choose
But gaze upon her face.

I told her of the Knight that wore
Upon his shield a burning brand;
And that for ten long years he woo'd
The Lady of the Land.

I told her how he pined: and ha!
The deep, the low, the pleading tone,
With which I sang another's love,
Interpreted my own.

She listen'd with a flitting blush,
With downcast eyes, and modest grace;
And she forgave me, that I gazed
Too fondly on her face.

But when I told the cruel scorn,
That crazed that bold and lovely Knight,
And that he cross'd the mountain-woods,
Nor rested day nor night;

That sometimes from the savage den,
And sometimes from the darksome shade,
And sometimes starting up at once
In green and sunny glade,—

There came and look'd him in the face
An angel beautiful and bright;
And that he knew it was a Fiend,
This miserable Knight!—

And that, unknowing what he did,
He leap'd amid a murderous band,
And saved from outrage worse than death,
The Lady of the Land!—

And how she wept and clasp'd his knees,
And how she tended him in vain,—
And ever strove to expiate
The scorn that crazed his brain;—

And that she nursed him in a cave;
And how his madness went away,
When on the yellow forest leaves
A dying man he lay;—

His dying words—but when I reach'd
That tenderest strain of all the ditty,
My faltering voice and pausing harp,
Disturb'd her soul with pity!

All impulses of soul and sense,
Had thrill'd my guileless Genevieve:
The music, and the doleful tale,
The rich and balmy eve;

And hopes, and fears that kindle hope,
An undistinguishable throng,
And gentle wishes, long subdued—
Subdued and cherish'd long.

She wept with pity and delight,
She blush'd with love, and virgin shame;
And, like the murmur of a dream,
I heard her breathe my name.

Her bosom heaved—she stepp'd aside,
As conscious of my look she stept;—
Then suddenly, with timorous eye,
She fled to me and wept.

She half inclosed me with her arms;
She press'd me with a meek embrace;
And, bending back her head, look'd up,
And gazed upon my face.

'Twas partly love, and partly fear,
And partly 'twas a bashful art,
That I might rather feel, than see,
The swelling of her heart.

I calm'd her fears, and she was calm,
And told her love with virgin pride;—
And so I won my Genevieve,
My bright and beauteous Bride.

ODES, ETC.

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE.

FRANCE. AN ODE.

February, 1798.

I.

YE Clouds! that far above me float and pause,
Whose pathless march no mortal may control!
Ye Ocean-Waves! that, wheresoe'er ye roll,
Yield homage only to eternal laws!
Ye Woods! that listen to the night-birds' singing,
Midway the smooth and perilous slope reclined,
Save when your own imperious branches swinging,
Have made a solemn music of the wind!
Where, like a man beloved of God,
Through glooms, which never woodman trod,
How oft, pursuing fancies holy,
My moonlight way o'er flowering weeds I wound,
Inspired, beyond the guess of folly,
By each rude shape and wild unconquerable sound!
O ye loud Waves! and O ye Forests high!
And O ye Clouds that far above me soar'd!
Thou rising Sun! thou blue rejoicing Sky!
Yea, every thing that is and will be free!
Bear witness for me, wheresoe'er ye be,
With what deep worship I have still adored
The spirit of divinest Liberty.

II.

When France in wrath her giant-limbs uprear'd,
And with that oath, which smote air, earth and sea,
Stamp'd her strong foot and said she would be free,
Bear witness for me, how I hoped and fear'd!
With what a joy my lofty gratulation
Unawed I sang, amid a slavish band:
And when to whelm the disenchanted nation,
Like fiends embattled by a wizard's wand,
The Monarchs march'd in evil day,
And Britain join'd the dire array;
Though dear her shores and circling ocean,
Though many friendships, many youthful loves,
Had swol'n the patriot emotion,
And flung a magic light o'er all her hills and groves;
Yet still my voice, unalter'd, sang defeat
To all that braved the tyrant-quelling lance,
And shame too long delay'd and vain retreat!
For ne'er, O Liberty! with partial aim
I dimm'd thy light or damp'd thy holy flame;
But bless'd the pæans of deliver'd France,
And hung my head and wept at Britain's name.

III.

"And what," I said, "though Blasphemy's loud scream
With that sweet music of deliverance strove?
Though all the fierce and drunken passions wove
A dance more wild than e'er was maniac's dream?
Ye storms, that round the dawning east assembled,
The Sun was rising, though ye hid his light!"
And when, to soothe my soul, that hoped and trembled,
The dissonance ceased, and all seem'd calm and bright;
When France her front, deep-scarr'd and gory,
Conceal'd with clustering wreaths of glory;

When, insupportably advancing,
Her arm made mockery of the warrior's ramp;
While, timid looks of fury glancing,
Domestic treason, crush'd beneath her fatal stamp,
Writhed like a wounded dragon in his gore;
Then I reproach'd my fears that would not flee;
"And soon," I said, "shall Wisdom teach her lore
In the low huts of them that toil and groan!
And, conquering by her happiness alone,
Shall France compel the nations to be free,
Till Love and Joy look round, and call the earth their own."

IV.

Forgive me, Freedom! O forgive those dreams!
I hear thy voice, I hear thy loud lament,
From bleak Helvetia's icy cavern sent—
I hear thy groans upon her blood-stain'd streams!
Heroes, that for your peaceful country perish'd,
And ye that, fleeing, spot your mountain-snows
With bleeding wounds; forgive me, that I cherish'd
One thought that ever bless'd your cruel foes!
To scatter rage and traitorous guilt,
Where Peace her jealous home had built;
A patriot-race to disinherit
Of all that made their stormy wilds so dear;
And with inexpiable spirit
To taint the bloodless freedom of the mountaineer—
O France, that mockest Heaven, adulterous, blind
And patriot only in pernicious toils,
Are these thy boasts, champion of humankind?
To mix with Kings in the low lust of sway,
Yell in the hunt, and share the murderous prey;
To insult the shrine of Liberty with spoils
From freemen torn; to tempt and to betray?

v.

The Sensual and the Dark rebel in vain,
Slaves by their own compulsion! In mad game
They burst their manacles and wear the name
Of Freedom, graven on a heavier chain!
O Liberty! with profitless endeavour
Have I pursued thee, many a weary hour;
But thou nor swell'st the victor's strain, nor ever
Didst breathe thy soul in forms of human power.
Alike from all, howe'er they praise thee
(Nor prayer, nor boastful name delays thee,)
Alike from Priestcraft's harpy minions,
And factious Blasphemy's obscener slaves,
Thou speedest on thy subtle pinions,
The guide of homeless winds, and playmate of the wave
And there I felt thee!—on that sea-cliff's verge,
Whose pines, scarce travell'd by the breeze above,
Had made one murmur with the distant surge!
Yes, while I stood and gazed, my temples bare,
And shot my being through earth, sea and air,
Possessing all things with intensest love,
O Liberty! my spirit felt thee there.

FEARS IN SOLITUDE.

WRITTEN IN APRIL 1798, DURING THE ALARM OF AN INVASION.

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE.

A GREEN and silent spot, amid the hills,
A small and silent dell! O'er stiller place
No singing sky-lark ever poised himself.
The hills are heathy, save that swelling slope,
Which hath a gay and gorgeous covering on,
All golden with the never-bloomless furze,
Which now blooms most profusely; but the dell,
Bathed by the mist, is fresh and delicate
As vernal corn-field, or the unripe flax,
When, through its half-transparent stalks at eve,
The level sunshine glimmers with green light.
Oh! 'tis a quiet spirit-healing nook,
Which all, methinks, would love; but chiefly he,
The humble man, who, in his youthful years,
Knew just so much of folly, as had made
His early manhood more securely wise!
Here he might lie on fern or wither'd heath,
While from the singing-lark (that sings unseen—
The minstrelsy that solitude loves best),
And from the sun, and from the breezy air,
Sweet influences trembled o'er his frame;
And he, with many feelings, many thoughts,
Made up a meditative joy, and found
Religious meanings in the forms of nature!
And so, his senses gradually wrapt

In a half sleep, he dreams of better worlds,
And dreaming hears thee still, O singing-lark,
That singest like an angel in the clouds!

My God! it is a melancholy thing
For such a man, who would full fain preserve
His soul in calmness, yet perforce must feel
For all his human brethren—O my God!
It weighs upon the heart, that he must think
What uproar and what strife may now be stirring
This way or that way o'er these silent hills—
Invasion, and the thunder and the shout,
And all the crash of onset; fear and rage,
And undetermined conflict—even now,
Even now, perchance, and in his native isle:
Carnage and groans beneath this blessed sun!
We have offended, oh! my countrymen!
We have offended very grievously,
And been most tyrannous. From east to west
A groan of accusation pierces Heaven!
The wretched plead against us; multitudes
Countless and vehement, the sons of God,
Our brethren! Like a cloud that travels on,
Steam'd up from Cairo's swamps of pestilence,
Even so, my countrymen! have we gone forth
And borne to distant tribes slavery and pangs,
And, deadlier far, our vices, whose deep taint
With slow perdition murders the whole man,
His body and his soul! Meanwhile, at home,
All individual dignity and power
Engulf'd in courts, committees, institutions,
Associations and societies,
A vain, speech-mouthing, speech-reporting guild,
One benefit-club for mutual flattery,

We have drunk up, demure as at a grace,
Pollutions from the brimming cup of wealth;
Contemptuous of all honourable rule,
Yet bartering freedom and the poor man's life
For gold, as at a market! The sweet words
Of Christian promise, words that even yet
Might stem destruction, were they wisely preach'd,
Are mutter'd o'er by men, whose tones proclaim
How flat and wearisome they feel their trade:
Rank scoffers some, but most too indolent
To deem them falsehoods or to know their truth.
Oh! blasphemous! the Book of Life is made
A superstitious instrument, on which
We gabble o'er the oaths we mean to break;
For all must swear—all and in every place,
College and wharf, council and justice-court;
All, all must swear, the briber and the bribed,
Merchant and lawyer, senator and priest,
The rich, the poor, the old man and the young;
All, all make up one scheme of perjury,
That faith doth reel; the very name of God
Sounds like a juggler's charm; and, bold with joy,
Forth from his dark and lonely hiding-place,
(Portentous sight!) the owlet Atheism,
Sailing on obscene wings athwart the noon,
Drops his blue-fringed lids, and holds them close,
And hooting at the glorious sun in Heaven,
Cries out, "Where is it?"

Thankless too for peace,
(Peace long preserved by fleets and perilous seas,)
Secure from actual warfare, we have loved
To swell the war-whoop, passionate for war!
Alas! for ages ignorant of all

Its ghastlier workings, (famine or blue plague,
Battle, or siege, or flight through wintry snows,)
We, this whole people, have been clamorous
For war and bloodshed; animating sports,
The which we pay for as a thing to talk of,
Spectators and not combatants! No guess
Anticipative of a wrong unfelt,
No speculation on contingency,
However dim and vague, too vague and dim
To yield a justifying cause; and forth,
(Stuff'd out with big preamble, holy names,
And adjurations of the God in Heaven,)
We send our mandates for the certain death
Of thousands and ten thousands! Boys and girls,
And women, that would groan to see a child
Pull off an insect's leg, all read of war,
The best amusement for our morning-meal!
The poor wretch, who has learnt his only prayers
From curses, who knows scarcely words enough
To ask a blessing from his Heavenly Father,
Becomes a fluent phraseman, absolute
And technical in victories and defeats,
And all our dainty terms for fratricide;
Terms which we trundle smoothly o'er our tongues
Like mere abstractions, empty sounds to which
We join no feeling and attach no form!
As if the soldier died without a wound;
As if the fibres of this godlike frame
Were gored without a pang; as if the wretch,
Who fell in battle, doing bloody deeds,
Pass'd off to Heaven, translated and not kill'd;
As though he had no wife to pine for him,
No God to judge him! Therefore, evil days
Are coming on us, O my countrymen!

And what if all-avenging Providence,
Strong and retributive, should make us know
The meaning of our words, force us to feel
The desolation and the agony
Of our fierce doings?

Spare us yet awhile,
Father and God! Oh! spare us yet awhile!
Oh! let not English women drag their flight
Fainting beneath the burthen of their babes,
Of the sweet infants, that but yesterday
Laugh'd at the breast! Sons, brothers, husbands, all
Who ever gazed with fondness on the forms
Which grew up with you round the same fire-side,
And all who ever heard the sabbath-bells
Without the infidel's scorn, make yourselves pure!
Stand forth! be men! repel an impious foe,
Impious and false, a light yet cruel race,
Who laugh away all virtue, mingling mirth
With deeds of murder; and still promising
Freedom, themselves too sensual to be free,
Poison life's amities, and cheat the heart
Of faith and quiet hope, and all that soothes
And all that lifts the spirit! Stand we forth;
Render them back upon the insulted ocean,
And let them toss as idly on its waves
As the vile sea-weed, which some mountain-blast
Swept from our shores! And oh! may we return
Not with a drunken triumph, but with fear,
Repenting of the wrongs with which we stung
So fierce a foe to frenzy!

I have told,
O Britons! O my brethren! I have told

Most bitter truth, but without bitterness.
Nor deem my zeal or factious or mis-timed;
For never can true courage dwell with them,
Who, playing tricks with conscience, dare not look
At their own vices. We have been too long
Dupes of a deep delusion! Some, belike,
Groaning with restless enmity, expect
All change from change of constituted power;
As if a Government had been a robe,
On which our vice and wretchedness were tagg'd
Like fancy-points and fringes, with the robe
Pull'd off at pleasure. Fondly these attach
A radical causation to a few
Poor drudges of chastising Providence,
Who borrow all their hues and qualities
From our own folly and rank wickedness,
Which gave them birth and nursed them. Others, meanwhile,
Dote with a mad idolatry; and all
Who will not fall before their images,
And yield them worship, they are enemies
Even of their country!

Such have I been deem'd—
But, O dear Britain! O my Mother Isle!
Needs must thou prove a name most dear and holy
To me, a son, a brother, and a friend,
A husband, and a father! who revere
All bounds of natural love, and find them all
Within the limits of thy rocky shores.
O native Britain! O my Mother Isle!
How shouldst thou prove aught else but dear and holy
To me, who from thy lakes and mountain-hills,
Thy clouds, thy quiet dales, thy rocks and seas,

Have drunk in all my intellectual life,
All sweet sensations, all ennobling thoughts,
All adoration of the God in nature,
All lovely and all honourable things,
Whatever makes this mortal spirit feel
The joy and greatness of its future being?
There lives nor form nor feeling in my soul
Unborrow'd from my country. O divine
And beauteous island! thou hast been my sole
And most magnificent temple, in the which
I walk with awe, and sing my stately songs,
Loving the God that made me!

May my fears,
My filial fears, be vain! and may the vaunts
And menace of the vengeful enemy
Pass like the gust, that roar'd and died away
In the distant tree: which heard, and only heard,
In this low dell, bow'd not the delicate grass.

But now the gentle dew-fall sends abroad
The fruit-like perfume of the golden furze:
The light has left the summit of the hill,
Though still a sunny gleam lies beautiful,
Aslant the ivied beacon. Now farewell,
Farewell, awhile, O soft and silent spot!
On the green sheep-track, up the heathy hill,
Homeward I wind my way; and lo! recall'd
From bodings that have well-nigh wearied me
I find myself upon the brow, and pause
Startled! And after lonely sojourning
In such a quiet and surrounded nook,
This burst of prospect, here the shadowy main
Dim tinted, there the mighty majesty

Of that huge amphitheatre of rich
And elmy fields, seems like society—
Conversing with the mind, and giving it
A livelier impulse and a dance of thought!
And now, beloved Stowey! I behold
Thy church-tower, and, methinks, the four huge elms
Clustering, which mark the mansion of my friend;
And close behind them, hidden from my view,
Is my own lowly cottage, where my babe
And my babe's mother dwell in peace! With light
And quicken'd footsteps thitherward I tend,
Remembering thee, O green and silent dell!
And grateful, that by nature's quietness
And solitary musings, all my heart
Is soften'd, and made worthy to indulge
Love, and the thoughts that yearn for humankind.

DEJECTION: AN ODE.

APRIL 1802.

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE.

"Late, late yestreen I saw the new moon,
With the old moon in her arms;
And I fear, I fear, my Master dear!
We shall have a deadly storm."
BALLAD OF SIR PATRICK SPENCE.

WELL! If the Bard was weather-wise, who made
The grand old ballad of Sir Patrick Spence,
This night, so tranquil now, will not go hence
Unroused by winds, that ply a busier trade
Than those which mould yon cloud in lazy flakes,
Or the dull sobbing draft, that moans and rakes
Upon the strings of this Eolian lute,
Which better far were mute.
For lo! the new-moon winter-bright!
And overspread with phantom light,
(With swimming phantom light o'erspread
But rimm'd and circled by a silver thread!)
I see the old moon in her lap, foretelling
The coming on of rain and squally blast.
And oh! that even now the gust were swelling,
And the slant night-shower driving loud and fast!
Those sounds which oft have raised me, whilst they awed,
And sent my soul abroad,
Might now perhaps their wonted impulse give,
Might startle this dull pain, and make it move and live!

II.

A grief without a pang, void, dark, and drear,
A stifled, drowsy, unimpassion'd grief,
Which finds no natural outlet, no relief,
In word, or sigh, or tear,—
O Lady! in this wan and heartless mood,
To other thoughts by yonder throstle woo'd,
All this long eve, so balmy and serene,
Have I been gazing on the western sky,
And its peculiar tint of yellow green:
And still I gaze,—and with how blank an eye!
And those thin clouds above, in flakes and bars,
That give away their motion to the stars;
Those stars, that glide behind them or between,
Now sparkling, now bedimm'd, but always seen:
Yon crescent moon as fix'd as if it grew
In its own cloudless, starless lake of blue;
I see them all so excellently fair,
I see, not feel, how beautiful they are!

III.

My genial spirits fail;
And what can these avail,
To lift the smothering weight from off my breast?
It were a vain endeavour,
Though I should gaze for ever
On that green light that lingers in the west:
I may not hope from outward forms to win
The passion and the life, whose fountains are within

IV.

O Lady! we receive but what we give,
And in our life alone does nature live:
Ours is her wedding-garment, ours her shroud!
And would we aught behold, of higher worth,

Than that inanimate cold world allow'd
To the poor loveless ever-anxious crowd,
Ah! from the soul itself must issue forth,
A light, a glory, a fair luminous cloud
Enveloping the Earth:
And from the soul itself must there be sent
A sweet and potent voice, of its own birth,
Of all sweet sounds the life and element!

V.

O pure of heart! thou need'st not ask of me
What this strong music in the soul may be!
What, and wherein it doth exist,
This light, this glory, this fair luminous mist,
This beautiful, and beauty-making power.
Joy, virtuous Lady! joy that ne'er was given,
Save to the pure, and in their purest hour,
Life, and Life's effluence, cloud at once and shower,—
Joy, Lady! is the spirit and the power,
Which wedding Nature to us gives in dower,
A new Earth and new Heaven,
Undreamt of by the sensual and the proud;
Joy is the sweet voice, joy the luminous cloud;—
We in ourselves rejoice!
And thence flows all that charms or ear or sight,
All melodies the echoes of that voice,
All colours a suffusion from that light.

VI.

There was a time when, though my path was rough,
This joy within me dallied with distress,
And all misfortunes were but as the stuff
Whence Fancy made me dreams of happiness:

For hope grew round me, like the twining vine,
And fruits, and foliage, not my own, seem'd mine.
But now afflictions bow me down to earth:
Nor care I that they rob me of my mirth,
But oh! each visitation
Suspends what nature gave me at my birth,
My shaping spirit of Imagination.
For not to think of what I needs must feel,
But to be still and patient, all I can;
And haply by abstruse research to steal
From my own nature all the natural man;—
This was my sole resource, my only plan:
Till that which suits a part infects the whole,
And now is almost grown the habit of my soul.

VII.

Hence, viper thoughts, that coil around my mind,
Reality's dark dream!
I turn from you, and listen to the wind,
Which long has raved unnoticed. What a scream
Of agony by torture lengthen'd out
That lute sent forth! Thou Wind, that ravest without,
Bare craig, or mountain-tairn,[5] or blasted tree,
Or pine-grove whither woodman never clomb,
Or lonely house, long held the witches' home,
Methinks were fitter instruments for thee,
Mad Lutanist! who in this month of showers,
Of dark brown gardens, and of peeping flowers,
Mak'st Devils' yule, with worse than wintry song,
The blossoms, buds, and timorous leaves among.
Thou Actor, perfect in all tragic sounds!
Thou mighty Poet, e'en to frenzy bold!
What tell'st thou now about?
'Tis of the rushing of a host in rout,

With groans of trampled men, with smarting wounds:—
At once they groan with pain, and shudder with the cold!
But hush! there is a pause of deepest silence!
And all that noise, as of a rushing crowd,
With groans, and tremulous shudderings,—all is over!
It tells another tale, with sounds less deep and loud
A tale of less affright,
And temper'd with delight,
As Otway's self had framed the tender lay,—
'Tis of a little child
Upon a lonesome wild,
Not far from home, but she hath lost her way:
And now moans low in bitter grief and fear,
And now screams loud, and hopes to make her mother hear.

VIII.

'Tis midnight, but small thoughts have I of sleep:
Full seldom may my friend such vigils keep!
Visit her, gentle Sleep! with wings of healing,
And may this storm be but a mountain-birth;
May all the stars hang bright above her dwelling,
Silent as though they watch'd the sleeping Earth!
With light heart may she rise,
Gay fancy, cheerful eyes;
Joy lift her spirit, joy attune her voice:
To her may all things live, from pole to pole,—
Their life the eddying of her living soul!
O simple spirit, guided from above,
Dear Lady! friend devoutest of my choice,
Thus mayest thou ever, evermore rejoice.

MISCELLANEOUS POEMS.

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE.

KUBLA KHAN;

OR, A VISION IN A DREAM.

A FRAGMENT.

1797.

IN Xanadu did Kubla Khan
A stately pleasure-dome decree:
Where Alph, the sacred river, ran
Through caverns measureless to man
Down to a sunless sea.
So twice five miles of fertile ground
With walls and towers were girdled round:
And there were gardens bright with sinuous rills
Where blossom'd many an incense-bearing tree;
And here were forests ancient as the hills,
Enfolding sunny spots of greenery.

But oh! that deep romantic chasm which slanted
Down the green hill athwart a cedarn cover!
A savage place! as holy and enchanted
As e'er beneath a waning moon was haunted
By woman wailing for her demon-lover!
And from this chasm, with ceaseless turmoil seething,
As if this earth in fast thick pants were breathing,
A mighty fountain momently was forced:
Amid whose swift half-intermitted burst
Huge fragments vaulted like rebounding hail,
Or chaffy grain beneath the thresher's flail:
And 'mid these dancing rocks at once and ever
It flung up momently the sacred river.

Fives miles meandering with a mazy motion
Through wood and dale the sacred river ran,
Then reach'd the caverns measureless to man,
And sank in tumult to a lifeless ocean:
And 'mid this tumult Kubla heard from far
Ancestral voices prophesying war!

The shadow of the dome of pleasure
Floated midway on the waves;
Where was heard the mingled measure
From the fountain and the caves.
It was a miracle of rare device,
A sunny pleasure-dome with caves of ice!

A damsel with a dulcimer
In a vision once I saw:
It was an Abyssinian maid,
And on her dulcimer she play'd,
Singing of Mount Abora.
Could I revive within me
Her symphony and song,
To such a deep delight 'twould win me,
That with music loud and long,
I would build that dome in air,
That sunny dome! those caves of ice!
And all who heard should see them there,
And all should cry, Beware! Beware!
His flashing eyes, his floating hair!
Weave a circle round him thrice,
And close your eyes with holy dread,
For he on honey-dew hath fed,
And drunk the milk of Paradise.

THE PAINS OF SLEEP.

1803.

ERE on my bed my limbs I lay,
It hath not been my use to pray
With moving lips or bended knees;
But silently, by slow degrees,
My spirit I to Love compose,
In humble trust mine eye-lids close,
With reverential resignation,
No wish conceived, no thought exprest,
Only a sense of supplication;
A sense all o'er my soul imprest
That I am weak, yet not unblest,
Since in me, round me, everywhere,
Eternal strength and wisdom are.

But yester-night I pray'd aloud
In anguish and in agony,
Up-starting from the fiendish crowd
Of shapes and thoughts that tortured me:
A lurid light, a trampling throng,
Sense of intolerable wrong,
And whom I scorn'd, those only strong!
Thirst of revenge, the powerless will
Still baffled, and yet burning still!
Desire, with loathing strangely mix'd
On wild or hateful objects fix'd.
Fantastic passions! maddening brawl!
And shame and terror over all!
Deeds to be hid which were not hid,
Which all confused I could not know,
Whether I suffer'd, or I did;
For all seem'd guilt, remorse, or woe,

My own or others', still the same
Life-stifling fear, soul-stifling shame.

So two nights pass'd ; the night's dismay
Sadden'd and stunn'd the coming day.
Sleep, the wide blessing, seem'd to me
Distemper's worst calamity.
The third night, when my own loud scream
Had waked me from the fiendish dream,
O'ercome with sufferings strange and wild,
I wept as I had been a child ;
And having thus by tears subdued
My anguish to a milder mood,
Such punishments, I said, were due
To natures deepliest stain'd with sin,—
For aye entempesting anew
The unfathomable hell within
The horror of their deeds to view,
To know and loathe, yet wish and do !
Such griefs with such men well agree,
But wherefore, wherefore fall on me ?
To be beloved is all I need,
And whom I love, I love indeed.

THE BALLAD OF THE DARK LADIE.

A FRAGMENT.

1799.

I. INTRODUCTION.

O LEAVE the lily on its stem;
O leave the rose upon the spray;
O leave the elder-bloom, fair maids!
And listen to my lay.

A cypress and a myrtle bough
This morn around my heart you twined,
Because it fashion'd mournfully
Its murmurs in the wind.

And now a tale of love and woe,
A woeful tale of love I sing;
Hark, gentle maidens! hark, it sighs
And trembles on the string.

But most, my own dear Genevieve,
It sighs and trembles most for thee!
O come and hear the cruel wrongs,
Befell the dark Ladie![6]

* * * * *

And now once more a tale of woe,
A woeful tale of love I sing
For thee, my Genevieve, it sighs,
And trembles on the string.

When last I sang the cruel scorn
That crazed this bold and lovely knight,
And how he roam'd the mountain woods,
Nor rested day nor night!

I promised thee a sister's tale
Of man's perfidious cruelty;
Come then and hear what cruel wrong
Befell the Dark Ladie.

II.—THE BALLAD.

BENEATH yon birch with silver bark,
And boughs so pendulous and fair,
The brook falls scatter'd down the rock;
And all is mossy there!

And there upon the moss she sits,
The Dark Ladie in silent pain;
The heavy tear is in her eye,
And drops and swells again.

Three times she sends her little page
Up the castled mountain's breast,
If he might find the Knight that wears
The Griffin for his crest.

The sun was sloping down the sky,
And she had linger'd there all day,
Counting moments, dreaming fears:—
O wherefore can he stay?

She hears a rustling o'er the brook,
She sees far off a swinging bough!
"'Tis He! 'Tis my betrothed Knight!
Lord Falkland, it is Thou!"

She springs, she clasps him round the neck,
She sobs a thousand hopes and fears,
Her kisses glowing on his cheeks
She quenches with her tears.

* * * * *

"My friends with rude ungentle words
They scoff and bid me fly to thee!
O give me shelter in thy breast!
O shield and shelter me!

"My Henry, I have given thee much,
I gave what I can ne'er recall,
I gave my heart, I gave my peace,
O Heaven! I gave thee all."

The Knight made answer to the Maid,
While to his heart he held her hand,—
"Nine castles hath my noble sire,
None statelier in the land.

"The fairest one shall be my love's,
The fairest castle of the nine!
Wait only till the stars peep out,
The fairest shall be thine:

"Wait only till the hand of eve
Hath wholly closed yon western bars,
And through the dark we too will steal
Beneath the twinkling stars!"—

"The dark? the dark? No! not the dark?
The twinkling stars? How, Henry? How?
O God! 'twas in the eye of noon
He pledged his sacred vow!

"And in the eye of noon, my love
Shall lead me from my mother's door,
Sweet boys and girls all clothed in white
Strewing flowers before:

"But first the nodding minstrels go
With music meet for lordly bowers,
The children next in snow-white vests,
Strewing buds and flowers!

"And then my love and I shall pace,
My jet black hair in pearly braids,
Between our comely bachelors
And blushing bridal maids."

* * * * *

YOUTH AND AGE.

1810-28.

VERSE, a breeze 'mid blossoms straying,
Where Hope clung feeding, like a bee—
Both were mine! Life went a-maying
With Nature, Hope, and Poesy,
When I was young!
When I was young?—Ah, woful WHEN!
Ah! for the change 'twixt Now and Then!
This breathing house not built with hands,
This body that does me grievous wrong,
O'er aery cliffs and glittering sands,
How lightly then it flash'd along:—
Like those trim skiffs, unknown of yore,
On winding lakes and rivers wide,
That ask no aid of sail or oar,
That fear no spite of wind or tide!
Nought cared this body for wind or weather
When Youth and I lived in't together.

Flowers are lovely; Love is flower-like;
Friendship is a sheltering tree;
O! the joys, that came down shower-like,
Of Friendship, Love, and Liberty,
Ere I was old!
Ere I was old? Ah woful ERE,
Which tells me, Youth's no longer here!
O Youth! for years so many and sweet,
'Tis known, that Thou and I were one,
I'll think it but a fond conceit—
It cannot be, that Thou art gone!

Thy vesper-bell hath not yet toll'd :—
And thou wert aye a masker bold!
What strange disguise hast now put on,
To make believe, that Thou art gone?
I see these locks in silvery slips,
This drooping gait, this alter'd size:
But spring-tide blossoms on thy lips,
And tears take sunshine from thine eyes!
Life is but thought: so think I will
That Youth and I are house-mates still.

Dew-drops are the gems of morning,
But the tears of mournful eve!
Where no hope is, life's a warning
That only serves to make us grieve,
When we are old:
That only serves to make us grieve
With oft and tedious taking-leave,
Like some poor nigh-related guest,
That may not rudely be dismist;
Yet hath outstay'd his welcome while,
And tells the jest without the smile.

FANCY IN NUBIBUS;

Or, The Poet in the Clouds.

1819.

O! IT is pleasant, with a heart at ease,
Just after sunset, or by moonlight skies,
To make the shifting clouds be what you please,
Or let the easily persuaded eyes
Own each quaint likeness issuing from the mould
Of a friend's fancy; or with head bent low
And cheek aslant see rivers flow of gold
'Twixt crimson banks; and then, a traveller, go
From mount to mount through Cloudland, gorgeous land
Or list'ning to the tide, with closed sight,
Be that blind bard, who on the Chian strand,
By those deep sounds possess'd with inward light,
Beheld the Iliad and the Odyssee
Rise to the swelling of the voiceful sea.

WORK WITHOUT HOPE.

21st February, 1827.

ALL Nature seems at work. Slugs leave their lair,—
The bees are stirring,—birds are on the wing,—
And Winter, slumbering in the open air,
Wears on his smiling face a dream of Spring!
And I, the while, the sole unbusy thing,
Nor honey make, nor pair, nor build, nor sing.

Yet well I ken the banks where Amaranths blow,
Have traced the fount whence streams of nectar flow.
Bloom, O ye Amaranths! bloom for whom ye may,
For me ye bloom not! Glide, rich streams, away!
With lips unbrighten'd, wreathless brow, I stroll:
And would you learn the spells that drowse my soul?
Work without hope draws nectar in a sieve,
And hope without an object cannot live.

CHRISTABEL.

1797.

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE.

PART I.[1]

'TIS the middle of night by the castle clock,
And the owls have awaken'd the crowing cock:
Tu—whit!——Tu—whoo!
And hark, again! the crowing cock,
How drowsily it crew.

Sir Leoline, the Baron rich,
Hath a toothless mastiff bitch;
From her kennel beneath the rock
She maketh answer to the clock,
Four for the quarters, and twelve for the hour;
Ever and aye, by shine and shower,
Sixteen short howls, not over loud:
Some say, she sees my lady's shroud.

Is the night chilly and dark?
The night is chilly, but not dark.
The thin gray cloud is spread on high,
It covers but not hides the sky.
The moon is behind, and at the full;
And yet she looks both small and dull.
The night is chill, the cloud is gray:
'Tis a month before the month of May,
And the Spring comes slowly up this way.

The lovely lady, Christabel,
Whom her father loves so well,
What makes her in the wood so late,
A furlong from the castle gate?
She had dreams all yesternight
Of her own betrothed knight;
And she in the midnight wood will pray
For the weal of her lover that's far away.

She stole along, she nothing spoke,
The sighs she heaved were soft and low,
And naught was green upon the oak,
But moss and rarest mistletoe:
She kneels beneath the huge oak tree,
And in silence prayeth she.

The lady sprang up suddenly,
The lovely lady, Christabel!
It moan'd as near, as near can be,
But what it is, she cannot tell.—
On the other side it seems to be
Of the huge, broad-breasted, old oak tree.

The night is chill; the forest bare;
Is it the wind that moaneth bleak?
There is not wind enough in the air
To move away the ringlet curl
From the lovely lady's cheek—
There is not wind enough to twirl
The one red leaf, the last of its clan,
That dances as often as dance it can,
Hanging so light, and hanging so high,
On the topmost twig that looks up at the sky.

Hush, beating heart of Christabel!
Jesu, Maria, shield her well!

She folded her arms beneath her cloak,
And stole to the other side of the oak.
What sees she there?

There she sees a damsel bright,
Drest in a silken robe of white,
That shadowy in the moonlight shone:
The neck that made that white robe wan,
Her stately neck, and arms were bare;
Her blue-vein'd feet unsandal'd were;
And wildly glitter'd here and there
The gems entangled in her hair.
I guess, 'twas frightful there to see
A lady so richly clad as she—
Beautiful exceedingly!

"Mary mother, save me now!"
(Said Christabel), "And who art thou?"

The lady strange made answer meet,
And her voice was faint and sweet:—
"Have pity on my sore distress,
I scarce can speak for weariness.
Stretch forth thy hand, and have no fear!"
Said Christabel, "How camest thou here?"
And the lady, whose voice was faint and sweet,
Did thus pursue her answer meet:—

"My sire is of a noble line,
And my name is Geraldine:
Five warriors seized me yestermorn,
Me, even me, a maid forlorn:
They choked my cries with force and fright,
And tied me on a palfrey white.
The palfrey was as fleet as wind,
And they rode furiously behind.

They spurred amain, their steeds were white;
And once we cross'd the shade of night.
As sure as Heaven shall rescue me,
I have no thought what men they be;
Nor do I know how long it is
(For I have lain entranced, I wis)
Since one, the tallest of the five,
Took me from the palfrey's back,
A weary woman, scarce alive.
Some mutter'd words his comrades spoke:
He placed me underneath this oak;
He swore they would return with haste;
Whither they went I cannot tell—
I thought I heard, some minutes past,
Sounds as of a castle bell.
Stretch forth thy hand" (thus ended she,)
"And help a wretched maid to flee."

Then Christabel stretch'd forth her hand
And comforted fair Geraldine:
"O well bright dame may you command
The service of Sir Leoline;
And gladly our stout chivalry
Will he send forth and friends withal
To guide and guard you safe and free
Home to your noble father's hall."

She rose: and forth with steps they pass'd
That strove to be, and were not, fast.
Her gracious stars the lady blest,
And thus spake on sweet Christabel:
"All our household are at rest,
The hall is silent as the cell,
Sir Leoline is weak in health
And may not well awaken'd be,

But we will move as if in stealth;
And I beseech your courtesy
This night, to share your couch with me."

They crossed the moat, and Christabel
Took the key that fitted well;
A little door she open'd straight,
All in the middle of the gate:
The gate that was iron'd within and without,
Where an army in battle-array had march'd out.
The lady sank, belike through pain,
And Christabel with might and main
Lifted her up, a weary weight,
Over the threshold of the gate:
Then the lady rose again,
And moved, as she were not in pain.

So, free from danger, free from fear,
They cross'd the court; right glad they were.
And Christabel devoutly cried
To the Lady by her side,
"Praise we the Virgin all divine
Who hath rescued thee from thy distress!"
"Alas, alas!" said Geraldine,
"I cannot speak for weariness."
So, free from danger, free from fear,
They cross'd the court: right glad they were.

Outside her kennel, the mastiff old
Lay fast asleep, in moonshine cold.
The mastiff old did not awake,
Yet she an angry moan did make!
And what can ail the mastiff bitch?

Never till now she uttered yell
Beneath the eye of Christabel.
Perhaps it is the owlet's scritch:
For what can ail the mastiff bitch?

They pass'd the hall, that echoes still,
Pass as lightly as you will!
The brands were flat, the brands were dying,
Amid their own white ashes lying;
But when the lady pass'd, there came
A tongue of light, a fit of flame;
And Christabel saw the lady's eye,
And nothing else saw she thereby,
Save the boss of the shield of Sir Leoline tall,
Which hung in a murky old niche in the wall,
"O softly tread," said Christabel,
"My father seldom sleepeth well."

Sweet Christabel her feet doth bare,
And, jealous of the listening air,
They steal their way from stair to stair,
Now in glimmer, and now in gloom,
And now they pass the Baron's room,
As still as death, with stifled breath!
And now have reach'd her chamber door;
And now doth Geraldine press down
The rushes of the chamber floor.

The moon shines dim in the open air,
And not a moonbeam enters here.
But they without its light can see
The chamber carved so curiously,
Carved with figures strange and sweet,
All made out of the carver's brain,
For a lady's chamber meet:

The lamp with twofold silver chain
Is fasten'd to an angel's feet.

The silver lamp burns dead and dim;
But Christabel the lamp will trim.
She trimm'd the lamp, and made it bright,
And left it swinging to and fro,
While Geraldine, in wretched plight,
Sank down upon the floor below.

"O weary lady, Geraldine,
I pray you, drink this cordial wine!
It is a wine of virtuous powers;
My mother made it of wild flowers."

"And will your mother pity me,
Who am a maiden most forlorn?"
Christabel answer'd—"Woe is me!
She died the hour that I was born.
I have heard the grey-hair'd friar tell,
How on her death-bed she did say,
That she should hear the castle-bell
Strike twelve upon my wedding-day.
O mother dear! that thou wert here!"
"I would," said Geraldine, "she were!"

But soon with alter'd voice, said she—
"Off, wandering mother! Peak and pine!
I have power to bid thee flee."
Alas! what ails poor Geraldine?
Why stares she with unsettled eye?
Can she the bodiless dead espy?
And why with hollow voice cries she,
"Off, woman, off! this hour is mine—
Though thou her guardian spirit be,
Off, woman, off! 'tis given to me."

Then Christabel knelt by the lady's side,
And raised to heaven her eyes so blue—
"Alas!" said she, "this ghastly ride—
Dear lady! it hath wilder'd you!"
The lady wiped her moist cold brow,
And faintly said, "'Tis over now!"

Again the wild-flower wine she drank:
Her fair large eyes 'gan glitter bright,
And from the floor whereon she sank,
The lofty lady stood upright:
She was most beautiful to see,
Like a lady of a far countrée.

And thus the lofty lady spake—
"All they, who live in the upper sky,
Do love you, holy Christabel!
And you love them, and for their sake
And for the good which me befell,
Even I, in my degree will try,
Fair maiden, to requite you well.
But now unrobe yourself; for I
Must pray, ere yet in bed I lie."

Quoth Christabel, "So let it be!"
And as the lady bade, did she.
Her gentle limbs did she undress,
And lay down in her loveliness.

But through her brain of weal and woe
So many thoughts moved to and fro,
That vain it were her lids to close;
So half-way from the bed she rose,
And on her elbow did recline
To look at the lady Geraldine.

Beneath the lamp the lady bow'd,
And slowly rolled her eyes around;
Then drawing in her breath aloud,
Like one that shudder'd, she unbound
The cincture from beneath her breast:
Her silken robe, and inner vest,
Dropt to her feet, and full in view,
Behold! her bosom and half her side—
A sight to dream of, not to tell!
O shield her! shield sweet Christabel!

Yet Geraldine nor speaks nor stirs:
Ah! what a stricken look was hers!
Deep from within she seems half-way
To lift some weight with sick assay,
And eyes the maid and seeks delay;
Then suddenly, as one defied,
Collects herself in scorn and pride,
And lay down by the maiden's side!—
And in her arms the maid she took,
Ah, well-a-day!
And with low voice and doleful look
These words did say:
"In the touch of this bosom there worketh a spell,
Which is lord of thy utterance, Christabel!
Thou knowest to-night, and wilt know to-morrow,
This mark of my shame, this seal of my sorrow;
But vainly thou warrest,
For this is alone in
Thy power to declare,
That in the dim forest
Thou heard'st a low moaning,
And found'st a bright lady, surpassingly fair:
And didst bring her home with thee, in love and in charity,
To shield her and shelter her from the damp air."

THE CONCLUSION TO PART I.

It was a lovely sight to see
The lady Christabel, when she
Was praying at the old oak tree.
Amid the jagged shadows
Of mossy leafless boughs
Kneeling in the moonlight,
To make her gentle vows;
Her slender palms together prest,
Heaving sometimes on her breast;
Her face resign'd to bliss or bale—
Her face, oh call it fair, not pale,
And both blue eyes more bright than clear,
Each about to have a tear.

With open eyes (ah woe is me!)
Asleep, and dreaming fearfully,
Fearfully dreaming, yet I wis,
Dreaming that alone, which is—
O sorrow and shame! Can this be she,
The lady who knelt at the old oak tree?
And lo! the worker of these harms,
That holds the maiden in her arms,
Seems to slumber still and mild,
As a mother with her child.

A star hath set, a star hath risen,
O Geraldine! since arms of thine
Have been the lovely lady's prison.
O Geraldine! one hour was thine—
Thou'st had thy will! By tairn and rill,
The night-birds all that hour were still.

But now they are jubilant anew,
From cliff and tower, tu—whoo! tu—whoo!
Tu—whoo! tu—whoo! from wood and fell!

And, see! the lady Christabel
Gathers herself from out her trance;
Her limbs relax, her countenance
Grows sad and soft; the smooth thin lids
Close o'er her eyes; and tears she sheds—
Large tears that leave the lashes bright!
And oft the while she seems to smile
As infants at a sudden light!

Yea, she doth smile, and she doth weep,
Like a youthful hermitess,
Beauteous in a wilderness,
Who, praying always, prays in sleep.
And, if she move unquietly,
Perchance, 'tis but the blood so free,
Comes back and tingles in her feet.
No doubt, she hath a vision sweet.
What if her guardian spirit 'twere?
What if she knew her mother near?
But this she knows, in joys and woes,
That saints will aid if men will call:
For the blue sky bends over all!

PART II.

"Each matin bell," the Baron saith,
"Knells us back to a world of death."
These words Sir Leoline first said,
When he rose and found his lady dead:
These words Sir Leoline will say,
Many a morn to his dying day!

And hence the custom and law began,
That still at dawn the sacristan,
Who duly pulls the heavy bell,
Five and forty beads must tell
Between each stroke—a warning knell,
Which not a soul can choose but hear
From Bratha Head to Windermere.

Saith Bracy the bard, "So let it knell!
And let the drowsy sacristan
Still count as slowly as he can!
There is no lack of such, I ween,
As well fill up the space between."
In Langdale Pike and Witch's Lair,
And Dungeon-ghyll so foully rent,
With ropes of rock and bells of air
Three sinful sextons' ghosts are pent,
Who all give back, one after t'other,
The death-note to their living brother;
And oft too, by the knell offended,
Just as their one! two! three! is ended,
The devil mocks the doleful tale
With a merry peal from Borrowdale.

The air is still! through mist and cloud
That merry peal comes ringing loud;

And Geraldine shakes off her dread,
And rises lightly from the bed;
Puts on her silken vestments white,
And tricks her hair in lovely plight,
And nothing doubting of her spell
Awakens the lady Christabel.
"Sleep you, sweet lady Christabel?
I trust that you have rested well."

And Christabel awoke and spied
The same who lay down by her side—
Oh rather say, the same whom she
Raised up beneath the old oak tree!
Nay, fairer yet! and yet more fair!
For she belike hath drunken deep
Of all the blessedness of sleep!
And while she spake, her looks, her air,
Such gentle thankfulness declare,
That (so it seem'd) her girded vests
Grew tight beneath her heaving breasts.
"Sure I have sinn'd!" said Christabel,
"Now heaven be praised if all be well!"
And in low faltering tones, yet sweet,
Did she the lofty lady greet,
With such perplexity of mind
As dreams too lively leave behind.

So quickly she rose, and quickly array'd
Her maiden limbs, and having pray'd
That He, who on the Cross did groan,
Might wash away her sins unknown.
She forthwith led fair Geraldine
To meet her sire, Sir Leoline.

The lovely maid and the lady tall
Are pacing both into the hall,

And pacing on through page and groom
Enter the Baron's presence-room.

The Baron rose, and while he prest
His gentle daughter to his breast,
With cheerful wonder in his eyes
The lady Geraldine espies,
And gave such welcome to the same,
As might beseem so bright a dame!

But when he heard the lady's tale,
And when she told her father's name,
Why wax'd Sir Leoline so pale,
Murmuring o'er the name again,
Lord Roland de Vaux of Tryermaine?

Alas! they had been friends in youth;
But whispering tongues can poison truth;
And constancy lives in realms above;
And life is thorny; and youth is vain;
And to be wroth with one we love,
Doth work like madness in the brain.
And thus it chanced, as I divine,
With Roland and Sir Leoline.
Each spake words of high disdain
And insult to his heart's best brother:
They parted—ne'er to meet again!
But never either found another
To free the hollow heart from paining—
They stood aloof, the scars remaining,
Like cliffs which had been rent asunder;
A dreary sea now flows between.
But neither heat, nor frost, nor thunder,
Shall wholly do away, I ween,
The marks of that which once hath been.

Sir Leoline, a moment's space,
Stood gazing on the damsel's face:
And the youthful Lord of Tryermaine
Came back upon his heart again.

Oh then the Baron forgot his age,
His noble heart swelled high with rage;
He swore by the wounds in Jesu's side,
He would proclaim it far and wide
With trump and solemn heraldry,
That they who thus had wrong'd the dame
Were base as spotted infamy!
"And if they dare deny the same,
My herald shall appoint a week,
And let the recreant traitors seek
My tourney court—that there and then
I may dislodge their reptile souls
From the bodies and forms of men!"
He spake: his eye in lightning rolls!
For the lady was ruthlessly seized; and he kenn'd
In the beautiful lady the child of his friend.

And now the tears were on his face,
And fondly in his arms he took
Fair Geraldine, who met the embrace,
Prolonging it with joyous look.
Which when she viewed, a vision fell
Upon the soul of Christabel,
The vision of fear, the touch and pain!
She shrunk and shudder'd, and saw again
(Ah! woe is me! Was it for thee,
Thou gentle maid! such sights to see?)

Again she saw that bosom old,
Again she felt that bosom cold,

And drew in her breath with a hissing sound:
Whereat the Knight turn'd wildly round,
And nothing saw but his own sweet maid,
With eyes upraised, as one that pray'd.

The touch, the sight, had pass'd away,
And in its stead that vision blest,
Which comforted her after-rest,
While in the lady's arms she lay,
Had put a rapture in her breast,
And on her lips and o'er her eyes
Spread smiles like light!

With new surprise,
"What ails then my beloved child?"
The Baron said—His daughter mild
Made answer, "All will yet be well!"
I ween she had no power to tell
Aught else: so mighty was the spell.
Yet he, who saw this Geraldine,
Had deemed her sure a thing divine,
Such sorrow with such grace she blended,
As if she feared she had offended
Sweet Christabel, that gentle maid!
And with such lowly tones she pray'd,
She might be sent without delay
Home to her father's mansion.

"Nay!
Nay, by my soul!" said Leoline.
"Ho! Bracy the bard, the charge be thine!
Go thou, with music sweet and loud,
And take two steeds with trappings proud,
And take the youth whom thou lov'st best
To bear thy harp and learn thy song,
And clothe you both in solemn vest,

And over the mountains haste along,
Lest wandering folk that are abroad
Detain you on the valley road.
And when he has cross'd the Irthing flood,
My merry bard! he hastes, he hastes
Up Knorren Moor, through Halegarth Wood,
And reaches soon that castle good
Which stands and threatens Scotland's wastes.

"Bard Bracy! bard Bracy! your horses are fleet,
Ye must ride up the hall, your music so sweet,
More loud than your horses' echoing feet!
And loud and loud to Lord Roland call
'Thy daughter is safe in Langdale Hall!
Thy beautiful daughter is safe and free—
Sir Leoline greets thee thus through me.
He bids thee come without delay
With all thy numerous array;
And take thy lovely daughter home:
And he will meet thee on the way
With all his numerous array
White with their panting palfreys' foam:
And, by mine honour! I will say
That I repent me of the day
When I spake words of fierce disdain
To Roland de Vaux of Tryermaine!
For since that evil hour hath flown,
Many a summer sun hath shone;
Yet ne'er found I a friend again
Like Roland de Vaux of Tryermaine."

The lady fell, and clasp'd his knees,
Her face upraised, her eyes o'erflowing;
And Bracy replied with faltering voice,
His gracious hail on all bestowing!—

"Thy words, thou sire of Christabel,
Are sweeter than my harp can tell;
Yet might I gain a boon of thee,
This day my journey may not be;
So strange a dream hath come to me;
That I had vow'd with music loud
To clear yon wood from thing unblest,
Warn'd by a vision in my rest!
For in my sleep I saw that dove,
That gentle bird, whom thou dost love,
And call'st by thy own daughter's name—
Sir Leoline! I saw the same,
Fluttering, and uttering fearful moan,
Among the green herbs in the forest alone.
Which when I saw and when I heard,
I wonder'd what might ail the bird;
For nothing near it could I see,
Save the grass and green herbs underneath the old tree."

"And in my dream methought I went
To search out what might there be found;
And what the sweet bird's trouble meant,
That thus lay fluttering on the ground.
I went and peer'd, and could descry
No cause for her distressful cry;
But yet for her dear lady's sake
I stoop'd, methought, the dove to take,
When lo! I saw a bright green snake
Coil'd around its wings and neck.
Green as the herbs on which it couch'd,
Close by the dove's its head it crouch'd;
And with the dove it heaves and stirs,
Swelling its neck as she swell'd hers!
I woke; it was the midnight hour,
The clock was echoing in the tower;

But though my slumber was gone by,
This dream it would not pass away—
It seems to live upon my eye!
And thence I vow'd this self-same day,
With music strong and saintly song,
To wander through the forest bare,
Lest aught unholy loiter there."

Thus Bracy said: the Baron, the while
Half-listening, heard him with a smile;
Then turned to Lady Geraldine,
His eyes made up of wonder and love;
And said in courtly accents fine,
Sweet maid, Lord Roland's beauteous dove,
With arms more strong than harp or song,
Thy sire and I will crush the snake!
He kiss'd her forehead as he spake,
And Geraldine, in maiden wise,
Casting down her large bright eyes,
With blushing cheek and courtesy fine,
She turn'd her from Sir Leoline;
Softly gathering up her train,
That o'er her right arm fell again;
And folded her arms across her chest,
And crouched her head upon her breast,
And look'd askance at Christabel——
Jesu, Maria, shield her well!

A snake's small eye blinks dull and shy,
And the lady's eyes they shrunk in her head,
Each shrunk up to a serpent's eye,
And with somewhat of malice, and more of dread
At Christabel she look'd askance!—
One moment—and the sight was fled!
But Christabel in dizzy trance

Stumbling on the unsteady ground
Shudder'd aloud, with a hissing sound ;
And Geraldine again turn'd round,
And like a thing that sought relief,
Full of wonder and full of grief,
She roll'd her large bright eyes divine
Wildly on Sir Leoline.

The maid, alas ! her thoughts are gone,
She nothing sees—no sight but one !
The maid, devoid of guile and sin,
I know not how, in fearful wise
So deeply had she drunken in
That look, those shrunken serpent eyes,
That all her features were resign'd
To this sole image in her mind :
And passively did imitate
That look of dull and treacherous hate.
And thus she stood, in dizzy trance,
Still picturing that look askance,
With forced unconscious sympathy,
Full before her father's view——
As far as such a look could be,
In eyes so innocent and blue !

And when, the trance was o'er, the maid
Paused awhile, and inly pray'd :
Then falling at the Baron's feet,
"By my mother's soul do I entreat
That thou this woman send away !"
She said : and more she could not say :
For what she knew she could not tell,
O'er-master'd by the mighty spell.

Why is thy cheek so wan and wild,
Sir Leoline ? Thy only child

Lies at thy feet, thy joy, thy pride,
So fair, so innocent, so mild;
The same, for whom thy lady died!
Oh by the pangs of her dear mother
Think thou no evil of thy child!
For her, and thee, and for no other,
She pray'd the moment ere she died:
Pray'd that the babe for whom she died,
Might prove her dear lord's joy and pride!
That prayer her deadly pangs beguiled,
Sir Leoline!
And wouldst thou wrong thy only child,
Her child and thine?

Within the Baron's heart and brain
If thoughts like these had any share,
They only swell'd his rage and pain,
And did but work confusion there.
His heart was cleft with pain and rage,
His cheeks they quiver'd, his eyes were wild,
Dishonour'd thus in his old age;
Dishonour'd by his only child,
And all his hospitality
To the wrong'd daughter of his friend
By more than woman's jealousy
Brought thus to a disgraceful end—
He roll'd his eye with stern regard
Upon the gentle minstrel bard,
And said in tones abrupt, austere—
"Why, Bracy! dost thou loiter here?
I bade thee hence!" The bard obey'd;
And turning from his own sweet maid,
The aged knight, Sir Leoline,
Led forth the Lady Geraldine!

THE CONCLUSION TO PART II.[5]

A LITTLE child, a limber elf,
Singing, dancing to itself,
A fairy thing with red round cheeks
That always finds, and never seeks,
Makes such a vision to the sight
As fills a father's eyes with light;
And pleasures flow in so thick and fast
Upon his heart, that he at last
Must needs express his love's excess
With words of unmeant bitterness.
Perhaps 'tis pretty to force together
Thoughts so all unlike each other;
To mutter and mock a broken charm,
To dally with wrong that does no harm.
Perhaps 'tis tender too and pretty
At each wild word to feel within
A sweet recoil of love and pity.
And what, if in a world of sin
(Oh sorrow and shame should this be true!)
Such giddiness of heart and brain
Comes seldom save from rage and pain,
So talks as it's most used to do.

THE RIME OF THE ANCIENT MARINER.

IN SEVEN PARTS.

1798

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE.

PART I.

An ancient Mariner meeteth three gallants bidden to a wedding-feast, and detaineth one.—The wedding-guest is spell-bound by the eye of the old sea-faring man, and constrained to hear his tale.—The Mariner tells how the ship sailed southward with a good wind and fair weather, till it reached the Line.—The wedding-guest heareth the bridal music; but the Mariner continueth his tale.—The ship drawn by a storm toward the south pole.—The land of ice, and of fearful sounds, where no living thing was to be seen.—Till a great sea-bird, called the Albatross, came through the snow-fog, and was received with great joy and hospitality.—And lo! the Albatross proveth a bird of good omen, and followeth the ship as it returned northward, through fog and floating ice.—The ancient Mariner inhospitably killeth the pious bird of good omen.

IT is an ancient Mariner,
And he stoppeth one of three.
"By thy long grey beard and glittering eye,
Now wherefore stopp'st thou me?

"The Bridegroom's doors are open'd wide,
And I am next of kin;
The guests are met, the feast is set:—
May'st hear the merry din."

He holds him with his skinny hand,
"There was a ship," quoth he.
"Hold off! unhand me, grey-beard loon!"
Eftsoons his hand dropt he.

He holds him with his glittering eye—
The wedding-guest stood still,
And listens like a three-years' child:
The Mariner hath his will.

The wedding-guest sat on a stone;
He cannot choose but hear;
And thus spake on that ancient man,
The bright-eyed Mariner:—

"The ship was cheer'd, the harbour clear'd,
Merrily did we drop
Below the kirk, below the hill,
Below the lighthouse top.

"The sun came up upon the left,
Out of the sea came he!
And he shone bright, and on the right
Went down into the sea.

"Higher and higher every day,
Till over the mast at noon—"
The wedding-guest here beat his breast,
For he heard the loud bassoon.

The bride hath paced into the hall,
Red as a rose is she;
Nodding their heads before her goes
The merry minstrelsy.

The wedding-guest he beat his breast,
Yet he cannot choose but hear;
And thus spake on that ancient man,
The bright-eyed Mariner.

"And now the storm-blast came, and he
Was tyrannous and strong:
He struck with his o'ertaking wings,
And chased us south along.

"With sloping masts and dipping prow,
As who pursued with yell and blow
Still treads the shadow of his foe
And forward bends his head,
The ship drove fast, loud roar'd the blast,
And southward aye we fled.

"And now there came both mist and snow,
And it grew wondrous cold;
And ice, mast-high, came floating by,
As green as emerald;

"And through the drifts the snowy clifts
Did send a dismal sheen:
Nor shapes of men nor beasts we ken—
The ice was all between.

"The ice was here, the ice was there,
The ice was all around:
It crack'd and growl'd, and roar'd and howl'd
Like noises in a swound!

"At length did cross an Albatross:
Through the fog it came:
As if it had been a Christian soul,
We hail'd it in God's name.

"It ate the food it ne'er had eat,
And round and round it flew.
The ice did split with a thunder-fit;
The helmsman steer'd us through!

"And a good south wind sprung up behind;
The Albatross did follow,
And every day, for food or play,
Came to the mariners' hollo!

"In mist or cloud, on mast or shroud,
It perch'd for vespers nine;
Whiles all the night, through fog-smoke white,
Glimmer'd the white moon-shine."

"God save thee, ancient Mariner!
From the fiends, that plague thee thus!—
Why look'st thou so?"—"With my cross-bow
I shot the Albatross!"

PART II.

His shipmates cry out against the ancient Mariner for killing the bird of good luck.—But when the fog cleared off, they justify the same, and thus make themselves accomplices in the crime.—The fair breeze continues; the ship enters the Pacific Ocean and sails northward, even till it reaches the Line.—The ship hath been suddenly becalmed,—and the Albatross begins to be avenged.—A spirit had followed them; one of the invisible inhabitants of this planet, neither departed souls nor angels, concerning whom the learned Jew, Josephus, and the Platonic Constantinopolitan, Michael Psellus, may be consulted. They are very numerous, and there is no climate or element without one or more.—The shipmates, in their sore distress, would fain throw the whole guilt on the ancient Mariner: in sign whereof they hang the dead sea-bird round his neck.

"The sun now rose upon the right:
Out of the sea came he,
Still hid in mist, and on the left
Went down into the sea.

"And the good south wind still blew behind,
But no sweet bird did follow,
Nor any day, for food or play,
Came to the mariners' hollo!

"And I had done a hellish thing,
And it would work 'em woe;
For all averr'd I had kill'd the bird
That made the breeze to blow."
'Ah, wretch!' said they, 'the bird to slay,
That made the breeze to blow!'

"Nor dim nor red, like God's own head,
The glorious sun uprist:

Then all averr'd I had kill'd the bird
That brought the fog and mist.
'Twas right,' said they, 'such birds to slay,
That bring the fog and mist.'

"The fair breeze blew, the white foam flew,
The furrow follow'd free:
We were the first that ever burst
Into that silent sea.

"Down dropt the breeze, the sails dropt down,
'Twas sad as sad could be;
And we did speak only to break
The silence of the sea!

"All in a hot and copper sky,
The bloody sun, at noon,
Right up above the mast did stand,
No bigger than the moon.

"Day after day, day after day,
We stuck, nor breath nor motion;
As idle as a painted ship
Upon a painted ocean.

"Water, water, every where,
And all the boards did shrink;
Water, water, everywhere,
Nor any drop to drink.

"The very deep did rot: O Christ!
That ever this should be!
Yea, slimy things did crawl with legs
Upon the slimy sea.

"About, about, in reel and rout,
The death-fires danced at night;
The water, like a witch's oils,
Burnt green, and blue and white.

"And some in dreams assured were
Of the spirit that plagued us so:
Nine fathom deep he had followed us
From the land of mist and snow.

"And every tongue, through utter drought,
Was withered at the root;
We could not speak, no more than if
We had been choked with soot.

"Ah! well a-day! what evil looks
Had I from old and young!
Instead of the cross, the Albatross
About my neck was hung."

PART III.

The ancient Mariner beholdeth a sign in the element afar off.—At its nearer approach, it seemeth him to be a ship; and at a dear ransom he freeth his speech from the bonds of thirst.—A flash of joy;—and horror follows. For can it be a *ship* that comes onward without wind or tide?—It seemeth him but the skeleton of a ship;—and its ribs are seen as bars on the face of the setting sun.—The spectre-woman and her death-mate, and no other on board the skeleton-ship.—Like vessel, like crew!—Death, and Life-in-Death, have diced for the ship's crew, and she (the latter) winneth the ancient Mariner.—No twilight within the courts of the sun.—At the rising of the moon,—one after another,—his shipmates drop down dead;—but Life-in-Death begins her work on the ancient Mariner.

"THERE pass'd a weary time. Each throat
Was parch'd, and glazed each eye.
A weary time! a weary time!
How glazed each weary eye!
When looking westward I beheld
A something in the sky.

"At first it seem'd a little speck,
And then it seem'd a mist:
It moved and moved, and took at last
A certain shape, I wist.

"A speck, a mist, a shape, I wist!
And still it near'd and near'd:
As if it dodged a water-sprite,
It plunged and tack'd and veer'd.

"With throats unslaked, with black lips baked,
We could not laugh nor wail;

Through utter drought all dumb we stood!
I bit my arm, I suck'd the blood,
And cried, 'A sail! a sail!'

"With throats unslaked, with black lips baked,
Agape they heard me call:
Gramercy! they for joy did grin,
And all at once their breath drew in,
As they were drinking all.

"'See! see!' (I cried) 'she tacks no more!
Hither to work us weal;
Without a breeze, without a tide,
She steadies with upright keel!'

"The western wave was all a-flame:
The day was well-nigh done:
Almost upon the western wave
Rested the broad bright sun;
When that strange shape drove suddenly
Betwixt us and the sun.

"And straight the sun was fleck'd with bars,
(Heaven's Mother send us grace!)
As if through a dungeon-grate he peer'd,
With broad and burning face.

"'Alas!' (thought I, and my heart beat loud)
'How fast she nears and nears!
Are those her sails that glance in the sun,
Like restless gossameres?

"'Are those her ribs through which the sun
Did peer, as through a grate?
And is that Woman all her crew?
Is that a Death? and are there two?
Is Death that woman's mate?'

"Her lips were red, her looks were free,
Her locks were yellow as gold:
Her skin was as white as leprosy,
The night-mare Life-in-Death was she,
Who thicks man's blood with cold.

"The naked hulk alongside came,
And the twain were casting dice;
'The game is done! I've won, I've won!'
Quoth she, and whistles thrice.

"The sun's rim dips; the stars rush out:
At one stride comes the dark;
With far-heard whisper, o'er the sea,
Off shot the spectre-bark.

"We listen'd and look'd sideways up!
Fear at my heart, as at a cup,
My life-blood seem'd to sip!
The stars were dim, and thick the night,
The steersman's face by his lamp gleam'd white!
From the sails the dew did drip—
Till clomb above the eastern bar
The horned moon, with one bright star
Within the nether tip.

"One after one, by the star-dogged moon,
Too quick for groan or sigh,
Each turn'd his face with a ghastly pang,
And cursed me with his eye.

"Four times fifty living men
(And I heard nor sigh nor groan)
With heavy thump, a lifeless lump,
They dropp'd down one by one.

"The souls did from their bodies fly,—
They fled to bliss or woe!
And every soul, it pass'd me by,
Like the whizz of my cross-bow!"

PART IV.

The wedding-guest feareth that a spirit is talking to him;—but the ancient Mariner assureth him of his bodily life, and proceedeth to relate his horrible penance.—He despiseth the creatures of the calm,—and envieth that *they* should live, and so many lie dead;—but the curse liveth for him in the eye of the dead men.—In his loneliness and fixedness he yearneth towards the journeying moon, and the stars that still sojourn, yet still move onward; and everywhere the blue sky belongs to them, and is their appointed rest, and their native country, and their own natural homes, which they enter unannounced, as lords that are certainly expected, and yet there is a silent joy at their arrival.—By the light of the moon he beholdeth God's creatures of the great calm;—their beauty and their happiness.—He blesseth them in his heart.—The spell begins to break.

"I FEAR thee, ancient Mariner!
I fear thy skinny hand!
And thou art long, and lank, and brown,
As is the ribb'd sea-sand.

"I fear thee and thy glittering eye,
And thy skinny hand so brown."—
"Fear not, fear not, thou wedding-guest!
This body dropt not down.

"Alone, alone, all, all alone,
Alone on a wide, wide sea!
And never a saint took pity on
My soul in agony.

"The many men, so beautiful!
And they all dead did lie:
And a thousand thousand slimy things
Lived on, and so did I.

"I look'd upon the rotting sea,
And drew my eyes away;
I look'd upon the rotting deck,
And there the dead men lay.

"I look'd to Heaven, and tried to pray;
But or ever a prayer had gusht,
A wicked whisper came, and made
My heart as dry as dust.

"I closed my lids, and kept them close,
And the balls like pulses beat;
For the sky and the sea, and the sea and the sky,
Lay like a load on my weary eye,
And the dead were at my feet.

"The cold sweat melted from their limbs,
Nor rot nor reek did they:
The look with which they look'd on me
Had never pass'd away.

"An orphan's curse would drag to hell
A spirit from on high;
But oh! more horrible than that
Is the curse in a dead man's eye!
Seven days, seven nights, I saw that curse,
And yet I could not die.

"The moving moon went up the sky
And no where did abide;
Softly she was going up,
And a star or two beside—

"Her beams bemock'd the sultry main,
Like April hoar-frost spread;
But where the ship's huge shadow lay,
The charmed water burnt alway
A still and awful red.

"Beyond the shadow of the ship,
I watch'd the water-snakes:
They moved in tracks of shining white,
And when they rear'd, the elfish light
Fell off in hoary flakes.

"Within the shadow of the ship,
I watch'd their rich attire:
Blue, glossy green, and velvet black,
They coil'd and swam; and every track
Was a flash of golden fire.

"O happy living things! no tongue
Their beauty might declare:
A spring of love gush'd from my heart,
And I blessed them unaware!
Sure my kind saint took pity on me,
And I bless'd them unaware.

"The selfsame moment I could pray;
And from my neck so free
The Albatross fell off, and sank
Like lead into the sea."

PART V

By grace of the holy Mother, the ancient Mariner is refreshed with rain.—He heareth sounds, and seeth strange sights and commotions in the sky and the element.—The bodies of the ship's crew are inspirited, and the ship moves on;—but not by the souls of the men, nor by demons of earth or middle air, but by a blessed troop of angelic spirits, sent down by the invocation of the guardian saint.—The lonesome Spirit from the south-pole carries on the ship as far as the Line, in obedience to the angelic troop, but still requireth vengeance.—The Polar Spirit's fellow-demons, the invisible inhabitants of the element, take part in his wrong; and two of them relate, one to the other, that penance long and heavy for the ancient Mariner hath been accorded to the Polar Spirit, who returneth southward.

"O SLEEP! it is a gentle thing,
Beloved from pole to pole!
To Mary Queen the praise be given!
She sent the gentle sleep from Heaven,
That slid into my soul.

"The silly buckets on the deck,
That had so long remained,
I dreamt that they were fill'd with dew;
And when I awoke it rain'd.

"My lips were wet, my throat was cold,
My garments all were dank;
Sure I had drunken in my dreams,
And still my body drank.

"I moved, and could not feel my limbs:
I was so light—almost
I thought that I had died in sleep,
And was a blessèd ghost.

"And soon I heard a roaring wind:
It did not come anear;
But with its sound it shook the sails
That were so thin and sere.

"The upper air burst into life!
And a hundred fire-flags sheen,
To and fro they were hurried about!
And to and fro, and in and out,
The wan stars danced between.

"And the coming wind did roar more loud,
And the sails did sigh like sedge;
And the rain pour'd down from one black cloud;
The moon was at its edge.

"The thick black cloud was cleft, and still
The moon was at its side:
Like waters shot from some high crag
The lightning fell with never a jag,
A river steep and wide.

"The loud wind never reach'd the ship,
Yet now the ship moved on!
Beneath the lightning and the moon
The dead men gave a groan.

"They groan'd, they stirr'd, they all uprose,
Nor spake, nor moved their eyes;
It had been strange, even in a dream
To have seen those dead men rise.

"The helmsman steer'd, the ship moved on;
Yet never a breeze up-blew;
The mariners all 'gan work the ropes
Where they were wont to do:

They raised their limbs like lifeless tools—
We were a ghastly crew.

"The body of my brother's son
Stood by me, knee to knee:
The body and I pull'd at one rope,
But he said nought to me."

"I fear thee, ancient Mariner!"
"Be calm, thou Wedding-Guest!
'Twas not those souls that fled in pain,
Which to their corses came again,
But a troop of spirits blest:

"For when it dawn'd—they dropp'd their arms,
And clustered round the mast;
Sweet sounds rose slowly through their mouths,
And from their bodies pass'd.

"Around, around, flew each sweet sound,
Then darted to the sun;
Slowly the sounds come back again,
Now mixed, now one by one.

"Sometimes a-dropping from the sky
I heard the skylark sing;
Sometimes all little birds that are,
How they seem'd to fill the sea and air
With their sweet jargoning!

"And now 'twas like all instruments,
Now like a lonely flute;
And now it is an angel's song,
That makes the heavens be mute.

"It ceased; yet still the sails made on
A pleasant noise till noon,
A noise like of a hidden brook
In the leafy month of June,
That to the sleeping woods all night
Singeth a quiet tune.

"Till noon we quietly sail'd on,
Yet never a breeze did breathe:
Slowly and smoothly went the ship,
Moved onward from beneath.

"Under the keel nine fathom deep,
From the land of mist and snow,
The spirit slid; and it was he
That made the ship to go.
The sails at noon left off their tune,
And the ship stood still also.

"The sun, right up above the mast,
Had fix'd her to the ocean;
But in a minute she 'gan stir,
With a short uneasy motion—
Backwards and forwards half her length
With a short uneasy motion.

"Then like a pawing horse let go,
She made a sudden bound:
It flung the blood into my head,
And I fell down in a swound.

"How long in that same fit I lay
I have not to declare;
But ere my living life return'd,
I heard and in my soul discern'd
Two voices in the air.

"'Is it he?' quoth one, 'Is this the man?
By Him who died on cross,
With his cruel bow he laid full low,
The harmless albatross.

"'The spirit who bideth by himself
In the land of mist and snow,
He loved the bird that loved the man
Who shot him with his bow.'

"The other was a softer voice,
As soft as honey-dew:
Quoth he, 'The man hath penance done
And penance more will do.'"

PART VI.

The Mariner hath been cast into a trance; for the angelic power causeth the vessel to drive northward faster than human life could endure.—The supernatural motion is retarded; the Mariner awakes, and his penance begins anew.—The curse is finally expiated;—and the ancient Mariner beholdeth his native country.—The angelic spirits leave the dead bodies,—and appear in their own forms of light.

FIRST VOICE.

"'But tell me, tell me! speak again,
Thy soft response renewing—
What makes that ship drive on so fast?
What is the ocean doing?'

SECOND VOICE.

"'Still as a slave before his lord,
The ocean hath no blast;
His great bright eye most silently
Up to the moon is cast.—

"'If he may know which way to go;
For she guides him smooth or grim.
See, brother, see! how graciously
She looketh down on him.'

FIRST VOICE.

"'But why drives on that ship so fast,
Without or wave or wind?'

SECOND VOICE.

"'The air is cut away before,
And closes from behind.

Fly, brother, fly! more high, more high!
Or we shall be belated:
For slow and slow that ship will go,
When the Mariner's trance is abated.'

"I woke, and we were sailing on
As in a gentle weather:
'Twas night, calm night, the moon was high;
The dead men stood together.

"All stood together on the deck,
For a charnel-dungeon fitter:
All fix'd on me their stony eyes,
That in the moon did glitter.

"The pang, the curse, with which they died,
Had never pass'd away:
I could not draw my eyes from theirs,
Nor turn them up to pray.

"And now this spell was snapt: once more
I view'd the ocean green,
And look'd far forth, yet little saw
Of what had else been seen—

"Like one that on a lonesome road
Doth walk in fear and dread,
And having once turn'd round walks on
And turns no more his head;
Because he knows a frightful fiend
Doth close behind him tread.

"But soon there breathed a wind on me,
Nor sound nor motion made:
Its path was not upon the sea,
In ripple or in shade.

"It raised my hair, it fann'd my cheek
Like a meadow-gale of spring—
It mingled strangely with my fears,
Yet it felt like a welcoming.

"Swiftly, swiftly flew the ship,
Yet she sail'd softly too:
Sweetly, sweetly blew the breeze—
On me alone it blew.

"O! dream of joy! is this indeed
The lighthouse top I see?
Is this the hill? is this the kirk?
Is this mine own countree?

"We drifted o'er the harbour-bar,
And I with sobs did pray—
'O let me be awake, my God!
Or let me sleep alway.'

"The harbour-bay was clear as glass,
So smoothly it was strewn!
And on the bay the moonlight lay,
And the shadow of the moon.

"The rock shone bright, the kirk no less,
That stands above the rock:
The moonlight steep'd in silentness
The steady weathercock.

"And the bay was white with silent light
Till rising from the same,
Full many shapes, that shadows were,
In crimson colours came.

"A little distance from the prow
Those crimson shadows were:
I turn'd my eyes upon the deck—
Oh, Christ! what saw I there!

"Each corse lay flat, lifeless and flat,
And, by the holy rood!
A man all light, a seraph-man,
On every corse there stood.

"This seraph-band, each waved his hand:
It was a heavenly sight!
They stood as signals to the land,
Each one a lovely light:

This seraph-band, each waved his hand,
No voice did they impart—
No voice; but oh! the silence sank
Like music on my heart.

"But soon I heard the dash of oars,
I heard the pilot's cheer;
My head was turn'd perforce away
And I saw a boat appear.

"The pilot, and the pilot's boy,
I heard them coming fast:
Dear Lord in Heaven! it was a joy
The dead men could not blast.

"I saw a third—I heard his voice:
It is the Hermit good!
He singeth aloud his godly hymns
That he makes in the wood.
He'll shrieve my soul, he'll wash away
The Albatross's blood."

PART VII.

The Hermit of the Wood—approacheth the ship with wonder.—The ship suddenly sinketh.—The ancient Mariner is saved in the pilot's boat.—The ancient Mariner earnestly entreateth the Hermit to shrieve him; and the penance of life falls on him.—And ever and anon throughout his future life an agony constraineth him to travel from land to land;—and to teach, by his own example, love and reverence to all things that God made and loveth.

"This Hermit good lives in that wood
Which slopes down to the sea.
How loudly his sweet voice he rears!
He loves to talk with marineres
That come from a far countree.

"He kneels at morn, and noon, and eve—
He hath a cushion plump:
It is the moss that wholly hides
The rotted old oak-stump.

"The skiff-boat neared: I heard them talk,
'Why, this is strange, I trow!
Where are those lights so many and fair,
That signal made but now?

"'Strange, by my faith!' the Hermit said—
'And they answer'd not our cheer!
The planks look warp'd! and see those sails
How thin they are and sere!
I never saw aught like to them,
Unless perchance it were

"'Brown skeletons of leaves that lag
My forest-brook along;
When the ivy-tod is heavy with snow,
And the owlet whoops to the wolf below,
That eats the she-wolf's young.'

"'Dear Lord! it hath a fiendish look,'—
(The pilot made reply).
'I am a-feared.'—'Push on, push on!'
Said the Hermit cheerily.

"The boat came closer to the ship,
But I nor spake nor stirr'd;
The boat came close beneath the ship,
And straight a sound was heard.

"Under the water it rumbled on,
Still louder and more dread:
It reach'd the ship, it split the bay;
The ship went down like lead.

"Stunned by that loud and dreadful sound,
Which sky and ocean smote,
Like one that hath been seven days drown'd
My body lay afloat;
But swift as dreams, myself I found
Within the pilot's boat.

'Upon the whirl, where sank the ship
The boat spun round and round;
And all was still, save that the hill
Was telling of the sound

"I moved my lips—the pilot shriek'd,
And fell down in a fit;
The holy Hermit raised his eyes,
And pray'd where he did sit.

"I took the oars: the pilot's boy,
Who now doth crazy go,
Laugh'd loud and long, and all the while
His eyes went to and fro.
'Ha! ha!' quoth he, 'full plain I see,
The Devil knows how to row.'

"And now, all in my own countree,
I stood on the firm land!
The Hermit stepp'd forth from the boat,
And scarcely he could stand.

"'O, shrieve me, shrieve me, holy man!'
The Hermit cross'd his brow.
'Say quick,' quoth he, 'I bid thee say—
What manner of man art thou?'

"Forthwith this frame of mine was wrench'd
With a woeful agony,
Which forced me to begin my tale;
And then it left me free.

"Since then at an uncertain hour,
That agony returns;
And till my ghastly tale is told,
This heart within me burns.

"I pass, like night, from land to land;
I have strange power of speech;
That moment that his face I see,
I know the man that must hear me:
To him my tale I teach.

"What loud uproar bursts from that door!
The wedding-guests are there;
But in the garden-bower the bride
And bridesmaids singing are;
And hark, the little vesper bell,
Which biddeth me to prayer!

"O Wedding-Guest! this soul hath been
Alone on a wide wide sea:
So lonely 'twas, that God Himself
Scarce seemed there to be.

"O sweeter than the marriage-feast,
'Tis sweeter far to me,
To walk together to the kirk
With a goodly company!—

"To walk together to the kirk,
And all together pray,
While each to his great Father bends,
Old men, and babes, and loving friends,
And youths and maidens gay!

"Farewell, farewell! but this I tell
To thee, thou Wedding-Guest!
He prayeth well, who loveth well
Both man and bird and beast.

"He prayeth best, who loveth best
All things both great and small:
For the dear God who loveth us,
He made and loveth all."

The Mariner, whose eye is bright,
Whose beard with age is hoar,
Is gone; and now the Wedding-Guest
Turned from the bridegroom's door.

He went like one that hath been stunn'd,
And is of sense forlorn:
A sadder and a wiser man,
He rose the morrow morn.

NOTES

TO POEMS BY SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE.

1 By imaginary Time I meant the state of a schoolboy's mind when on his return to school he projects his being in his day-dreams, and lives in his next holidays, six months hence: and this I contrasted with real Time.—S. T. COLERIDGE, in Preface to "Sibylline Leaves," 1817.

2 Hartley Coleridge was born on the 19th of September, but his father, who was at Birmingham, did not hear the news until the 20th.

3 Probably Charles Lamb, who refers to this sonnet in Nov. 1796 as "Your last, and, in my eye, best sonnet."

4 A fragment of "The Ballad of the Dark Ladie." First published in the *Morning Post*, 1799, and afterwards in the second edition of the "Lyrical Ballads," 1800.

5 Tairn is a small lake, generally, if not always applied, to the lakes up in the mountains, and which are the feeders of those in the valleys. This address to the storm-wind will not appear extravagant to those who have heard it at night, and in a mountainous country.

6 The verses entitled "Love" (page 473), which were inserted in the "Lyrical Ballads," 1800, follow here.

7 Coleridge in his preface to Christabel, published in 1816, says, "The first part of the following poem was written in the year 1797, at Stowey, in the county of Somerset. The second part, after my return from Germany in the year 1800, at Keswick, Cumberland. Since the latter date, my poetic powers have been, till very lately, in a state of suspended animation. But as, in my very first conception of the tale, I had the whole present to my mind, with the wholeness no less than with the liveliness of a vision, I trust that I shall be able to embody in verse the three parts yet to come, in the course of the present year. It is probable that if the poem had been finished at either of the former periods, or if even the first and second parts had been published in the year 1800, the impression of its originality would have been much greater than I dare at present expect. But for this I have only my

own indolence to blame. The dates are mentioned for the exclusive purpose of precluding charges of plagiarism or servile imitation from myself. For there is amongst us a set of critics who seem to hold that every possible thought and image is traditional; who have no notion that there are such things as fountains in the world, small as well as great; and who would therefore charitably derive every rill they behold flowing, from a perforation made in some other man's tank. I am confident, however, that as far as the present poem is concerned, the celebrated poets whose writings I might be suspected of having imitated, either in particular passages or in the tone and spirit of the whole, would be among the first to vindicate me from the charge, and who, on any striking coincidence, would permit me to address them in this doggrel version of two monkish Latin hexameters:—

"'Tis mine and it is likewise yours;
But an' if this will not do,
Let it be mine, good friend, for I
Am the poorer of the two.'"

Mr. Thomas Ashe, in the "Aldine Edition" of Coleridge, says, "There is little doubt that Christabel suggested to Scott the series of poem-tales which became so famous. He wrote the first canto of the 'Lay of the Last Minstrel,' in 1802. (The poem was printed in 1805.) The first part, at least, of Christabel had been long circulating in manuscript at that date. Byron's poems, of the same kind, followed a few years later."

8 Coleridge, says Thomas Ashe (Aldine Edition), is mocking us. He had, we can imagine, been interrupted by his little son Hartley, four years old, and had scolded him, when he wrote these lines. Then he calmly sets them down as "the conclusion to Part II." We may well say, with himself—

"'Perhaps 'tis pretty to force together
Thoughts so all unlike each other.'"

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